

Saddam voted 'Man of the Year'

LONDON (R) — British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service listeners have voted Iraqi President Saddam Hussein "Man of the Year" to the embarrassment of the corporation, the Observer newspaper reported Sunday. Many letters for Saddam were postmarked in northern Nigeria, where the Hausa language service of the Africa section transmits to a regular audience of eight million a week. "A large number of Hausa service listeners are, of course, Muslim," a World Service spokesman said. "And quite a few did also say that they disapproved of (Saddam) Hussein's invasion of Kuwait." The award "has also hardly amused the Foreign Office, whose stiff upper-lips positively quivered when told of the result," the Observer said in a front-page article. The Foreign Office funds all the World Service's 30 language sections. Past winners of the award include Namibian leader Sam Nujoma and United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

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Iran calls for Islamic summit

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran Sunday called for an emergency summit of Muslim countries to seek a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported. The agency quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Morteza Sarmadi as saying Tehran had sent a note to the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) "in view of the grave international situation and the 'Persian' Gulf crisis."

Shamir wants talks with all Arabs including Iraq

PARIS (R) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said Sunday that Israel wanted peace talks in occupied Jerusalem with Arab states including Iraq if President Saddam Hussein withdrew his troops from Kuwait. But he specified that he meant bilateral talks, not an international conference. Shamir said in a French radio interview that Israel was ready to negotiate with the Arab World on its problems. "We want direct, serious talks. Iraq as part of the Arab World can participate," he said. "I would like to receive all the leaders of the Arab World in (occupied) Jerusalem if they want to talk peace between Israel and the Arab World." Shamir said such a process could not happen "today, tomorrow or the day after" but would take months, adding that he saw no direct link between the Gulf crisis and the Arab-Israeli conflict. "We have not spoken of an international conference because the goal of peace we first have to have direct negotiations between the parties to the conflict," Shamir said.

Iran hangs 4 on drug charges

NICOSIA (AP) — Three men and a woman were hanged in Iran's western Hamedan province Sunday on drug trafficking charges. The Islamic Republic News Agency said the four were sentenced to death by the Islamic revolutionary court in the city of Mahavand. Iran's draconian laws call for a mandatory death sentence for possession of even small quantities of drugs with intent to sell. Iran has hanged more than 2,000 alleged drug traffickers, and jailed more than 100,000 so-called drug addicts since December 1989.

Armco distributes gas masks

DHAHRAN (AP) — Hundreds of foreign and Saudi employees of the government-run oil firm Aramco lined up Sunday to get gas masks distributed free by the company. Parents said they had been advised to send their children to school with the masks, part of a stepped up civil defence plan in the Eastern Province bordering Kuwait as the Jan. 15 deadline for possible use of force against Iraq draws near. The Aramco programme to distribute gas masks to its 45,000 employees, including over 2,000 American and their dependents, coincides with a government-subsidised distribution programme throughout the province. Private firms are selling the \$133 masks for \$40 apiece, with the government making up the difference.

Italy sends six planes to Turkey

GIOIA DEL COLLE, Italy (AP) — Six Italian air force jets flew to Turkey Sunday, part of a special NATO unit intended to strengthen the country's defence in case war breaks out in Iraq. The F-104 reconnaissance jets left from the military airport in the southern city of Gioia del Colle. They headed for the Erbak military airport in Turkey's southeastern Malatya province, officials said. NATO decided last Wednesday to send squadrons of German, Italian and Belgian jetfighters to Turkey at the request of the country, which belongs to the alliance. The 18 Belgian fighter-bombers also left for Turkey Sunday.

Saddam: Iraq ready for any sacrifice to keep Kuwait, free Palestine

Iraqi leader reinforces tough line ahead of Baker-Aziz talks in Geneva

By a Jordan Times Staff Writer with agency dispatches

BAGHDAD — President Saddam Hussein said Sunday Iraq would bear any sacrifice to keep Kuwait and free Palestine, reinforcing a tough line after similar talks from U.S. President George Bush.

In a televised speech marking army day, Saddam said Iraq's one-million strong military had "unshakable faith in their mission... in the struggle which will not break regardless of the sacrifices."

"The battle against the tyranny represented by the United States and the slogans of hegemony it is raising... is not expected to be a short one," Saddam said in the 25-minute speech.

"A battle of such scope requires great sacrifices both in quantity and quality. Irrespective of the foreseen and unforeseen consequences which will not doubt please the friend and anger the enemy," Saddam added.

The Iraqi leader spoke throughout in calm, measured tones, but returned again and again to the same themes. Praising his army, Saddam said, "in one battle you prepared a historical opportunity for which our forefathers had longed and died without witnessing it."

"That was the return of Kuwait to its Iraqi motherland — a reality, not a wish or a claim, that made it the 19th province of the treasured political map of Iraq for the present and future times..."

Dressed in his customary olive green military fatigues and dark beret, Saddam opened his speech with a verse from the Koran, which said war is moral when the cause is just.

Preceded by several minutes of martial music, he interspersed his speech with other verses from the Koran.

Bush, stating terms for talks in Geneva Wednesday between Secretary of State James Baker and Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, said Saturday Baghdad faced "terrible consequences" if it did not pull out of Kuwait.

Half a million U.S.-led multinational troops have assembled in the Gulf ready to attack Iraq if it does not withdraw from Kuwait by a U.N. Security Council deadline of Jan. 15.

Saddam again linked any solution to the Gulf crisis to a Middle East peace settlement providing for a Palestinian state, a connection rejected by Western and some Arab states involved in the multinational force.

Diplomats said the speech reaffirmed a belligerent Iraqi stance ahead of the Geneva talks but also noted that it followed Bush's statements Saturday.

It has been a common feature in the five-month standoff that whenever Iraq or the U.S. issues a tough statement, it is followed by a tougher one from the other.

Saddam said Middle East issues amounted to one great, long battle and told his army it would "entail great sacrifices in quantity and quality (but) the results will please friends and displease the foe..."

"It is a battle for the sake of Palestine," he said.

Attempts to deal with Middle East problems as separate issues "could

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Vauzelle returns to Paris; said carrying Iraqi compromise offer

AMMAN (J.T.) — Special French envoy Michel Vauzelle was returning to Paris Sunday after a lengthy meeting with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, who reportedly told his French visitor that Iraq might be willing to make concessions in exchange for concessions from the West over the Gulf crisis.

Vauzelle, head of the National Assembly's Foreign Relations Committee, passed through Amman Sunday.

Vauzelle, former spokesman for President Francois Mitterrand, refused to speak to reporters at the airport.

Vauzelle flew out aboard a Royal Jordanian flight to Tunis from where he was catching another flight to Paris later Sunday.

President Saddam reportedly told Vauzelle that Iraq might be willing to make concessions to settle the Gulf crisis in exchange for concessions from the West, according to a French diplomat.

After talks between Saddam and Vauzelle, the diplomat characterised Saddam's remarks as indicating that "if the West and the United States are ready to make a sacrifice, then Iraq might make some sacrifices too."

The diplomat, who was interviewed by the Associated Press, spoke in exchange for anonymity.

The diplomat said it was his understanding that the "sacrifice" sought by Iraq was an international peace conference to settle the Palestinian issue.

Iraq has in the past sought a linkage between any Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories and a Syrian pullback of its troops from Lebanon.

However, Washington has rejected such a linkage.

"I have come here to listen and I must say that I learned a lot about the situation from President Saddam Hussein," Vauzelle told reporters after

Saturday's meeting. "I am not optimistic but neither am I pessimistic," he said. "I hope everything will soon be over."

Another French diplomat, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said Vauzelle met with Saddam to receive answers to questions he had earlier submitted to Aziz, who also sat in on the Saddam meeting.

No further details were available on the substance of the talks.

Vauzelle had held separate talks with Aziz after arriving in Baghdad Thursday.

"It's time for realism," said Vauzelle, who said he was in Baghdad privately but added that he would report back to Mitterrand on his return to Paris.

"I have obtained information and now it's up to the politicians concerned to take decisions," he said.

Jan. 15 deadline is real, Baker asserts

NEW YORK (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said Sunday he was meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz in hopes of resolving the Mideast crisis but "closing the door" to further meetings. "This Jan. 15 deadline is real. We've been dealing with this matter for over five months," Baker said in an interview with the ABC Broadcasting network.

He was referring to the deadline after which the United Nations would authorise the use of force to dislodge Iraq from Kuwait.

"At some point," Baker emphasised, "we've got to get the message through to them."

Baker said that he would tell Aziz when they meet Wednesday in Geneva "there are two options." He said that no hostilities would erupt if Iraq were to "withdraw from Kuwait." But if not, he said they "will have force used against them to eject them from Kuwait."

He reiterated that the discussions with Aziz would not be concessions to secure an Iraqi withdrawal.

"We will not be going to negotiate," he said. Baker said that after trying for three weeks to meet with Iraqi leaders, "I am closing the door" to further meetings.

any Dick Cheney warned that Iraq must withdraw from Kuwait by Jan. 15 or face the "very real" threat of force.

U.S. President George Bush has been "very firm and very clear... Saddam must get out of Kuwait and he will not be awarded for aggression," Cheney said in an interview with the CBS Broadcasting network.

Cheney's comments echoed Bush's calls a day earlier in a radio message demanding Iraq's complete and unconditional withdrawal by the U.N. deadline or risk the threat of war.

Saddam "has to know that if he does not comply with the U.N. Security Council resolutions... that in fact he faces the very real threat that U.S. and allied military force will be used to force him out," Cheney added.

Mohammad Al Mashat, Iraqi ambassador to the United States, refused to speculate about the outcome of the Geneva talks. He said Iraq has peaceful intentions.

"War is the United States' position," the ambassador said in a Sunday interview with the NBC Broadcasting network. "We're not going to start a war. We want peace."

Izzat Ibrahim to visit Tehran

NICOSIA (AP) — A top Iraqi official will visit Iran this week for talks on a peace accord between the two countries and the Gulf crisis, the Tehran Times reported Sunday.

Quoting unidentified Iranian sources, the English-language daily said Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of Iraq's revolutionary Command Council, will arrive in Tehran Tuesday on an official visit.

The paper, which is close to the government, quoted sources as saying Ibrahim will follow up issues related to a peace accord struck between the two countries in August, only days after Iraq invaded Kuwait.

"Of course, during his stay here talks will also focus on the 'Persian' Gulf crisis," the Times quoted one source as saying.

Iraq and Iran agreed in August to formally end the state of war between them.

Iran shares a 1,200-kilometre border with Iraq. Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani, a so-called pragmatist who wants good relations

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FIRSTHAND LOOK: United Nations General Assembly President Guido de Marco of Malta Sunday visits the Palestine refugee camp at Jerash (see page 3).



Photos by Youssef Al 'Alian

Churches back King's peace efforts

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday received a cable of support from the leaders of 75 churches in the world affiliated to the Church of Christ.

The church leaders expressed support for King Hussein's efforts aiming at finding a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis and to avert a war, "whose consequences will be devastating to all the world." The church leaders also sent similar cables to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and U.S. President George Bush appealing for a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis.

The representative of the Church of Christ in Jordan, Jack Qazzaz, Sunday appealed to all Christian sects in the world to work in the service of the cause of peace, particularly in the Gulf region. He also affirmed the need to solve all Middle East problems.

Hamas leader says Israel cannot weaken Palestinians

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The wheelchair-bound leader of the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas movement warned Israel at his trial Sunday that the widespread arrests of his followers would not "weaken the Palestinian people."

Sheikh Ahmad Ismail Yassin, 55, confessed to founding Hamas Sunday, as his trial began in a tightly guarded military court in the Gaza Strip a full year after formal charges were brought against him.

Yassin denied the additional 14 charges, including organising attacks on civilians and causing the deaths of two Israeli soldiers, Israel Radio said.

The soldiers were kidnapped, and the army said both were believed killed, though only one body was found. No one has been convicted of the actual murders.

"The defendant founded the

the occupied territories.

On Sunday, Israel jailed without trial for a year a senior Hamas leader in the West Bank, Sheikh Hamad Bitawi. Bitawi is a Muslim religious judge in West Bank town of Tulkarm.

The wheelchair-bound Yassin, paralysed in a sporting accident when he was 16, said testimony had been taken from him after he was beaten, tortured and deprived of sleep for four days straight. He told the court he suffered a head injury when he collapsed from exhaustion.

Dahamshe asked to have this testimony disqualified. He also challenged the court's jurisdiction, saying it contravened international law by operating in occupied territory.

Yassin denied Israeli charges that he recruited the killers of the two soldiers.

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EC says it regrets Iraqi stand, offer stands

LUXEMBOURG (Agencies) — The European Community (EC) countries expressed regret Sunday over Iraq's decision to turn down their invitation to Gulf crisis talks on Jan. 10, but said the offer remained open.

"The 12 (EC members) regret that their invitation has not been accepted," they said in a statement issued in Luxembourg, which holds the EC presidency.

"They believe that this reaction of the Iraqi government does not contribute to the efforts undertaken in the search for a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis."

Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz is due to meet U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Geneva Wednesday in a last ditch effort to avert war over Iraq's five-month occupation of Kuwait.

The community had invited Aziz to visit Luxembourg the following day. But the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, in a statement on Saturday, said the Iraqi people "resent the submissive policies pursued by certain Euro-

pean governments towards the aggressive and haughty American policies."

If the Europeans wanted to talk, they were welcome to come to Baghdad, the Iraqi statement said.

Belgian Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens said this was out of the question.

"We will not let ourselves be humiliated to that extent," he told Belgian radio Saturday night. "We made an offer yesterday. If it is rejected by Iraq definitely, Iraq will suffer the consequences."

Iraq's rejection of the EC offer was a blow to the community's first attempts to conduct a common foreign policy, a key part of its move towards eventual political union.

But it may still have a role to play. Luxembourg's Foreign Minister Jacques Poos will meet Baker for talks in London on Monday, a government spokesman said.

France expressed regret for

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Fierce fighting blocks Mogadishu evacuation

NAIROBI (Agencies) — Heavy fighting Sunday prevented Italian planes trying to rescue foreigners from landing in Somalia's war-torn capital where rebels claimed to have mounted a "final assault" on the airport.

Twenty minutes before two Italian C-130s emblazoned with Red Cross emblems were scheduled to land in Mogadishu, a Red Cross official in the city told them by radio to turn back because of fighting, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement in Rome.

The statement said the planes would try again Monday to rescue the approximately 50 Italians still in Mogadishu, and that if they failed the foreigners could be evacuated by sea.

The Italian frigate Orsa was scheduled to reach the seaside city Tuesday.

In Rome, the rebel United Somali Congress (USC) said that, reinforced by armed vehicles and insurgents from the countryside, it had launched "the final assault on the airport" where it claimed President

Mohammad Siad Barre was staying.

Diplomats and other sources, however, have denied Siad Barre took refuge in an airport bunker, as the rebels have claimed, and that he has been at the presidential palace since fighting broke out Dec. 30.

Fighting has raged for the past week as rebels fight to end Siad Barre's 21-year rule, and fleeing residents have said the city is dangerous and chaotic.

The United States said earlier it had rescued more than 250 Americans and other foreigners from the city, using helicopters to ferry people from the U.S. embassy compound to the aircraft carrier Guam and the amphibious transport ship Trenton, anchored offshore.

Those evacuated included American citizens, the Soviet ambassador and his staff and diplomats and private citizens from more than a dozen other countries.

Diplomatic sources in the

(Continued on page 5)

Freighter sinks off Oman after mystery incident

MUSCAT (AP) — Omani navy vessels rescued the crew of a Cypriot freighter that sank Sunday in rough seas in the Gulf of Oman after it hit an object in the water or had an internal explosion, sources said.

Shipping executives based in the Gulf said the Demetra Beauty sank at 1.30 p.m. (0939 GMT) but the crew was taken safely ashore to Oman.

There was speculation it might have hit a mine but the shipping executives said they doubted that.

The executives, who spoke on condition they not be named, said the vessel was empty when it sustained an explosion whose causes were not known.

The number and nationality of the crew was not immediately available but they were believed to be all-Cypriot.

The captain of the 6,514-tonne Demetra Beauty ordered the crew to abandon ship because of a hole in the vessel's port side cargo holds, said the sources, who spoke on condition they not be named.

They said two U.S. navy ships stood by in support as a royal navy of Oman patrol craft began taking the crew off the sinking freighter.

A U.S. Navy spokesman based in the Gulf said the American warships were not directly involved in providing assistance to the Demetra Beauty. He said that the ships may have been nearby because U.S. navy warships are in the Gulf of Oman.

The London-based Lloyd's shipping intelligence unit, which monitors shipping traffic around the world, located the incident at about (210 kilometres) away from the Strait of Hormuz, strategic gateway to the Gulf. It did not say when the vessel sank.

heading. It said the vessel "struck probably a mine or something else local," at 6:25 a.m. Sunday (0225 GMT).

"A big column of water sprung in way of no. 2 and 3 cargo holds port side," Lloyd's said.

Several Gulf-based shipping executives discounted the likelihood of mines floating in that open sea area, some more than 110 kilometres off Muscat.

One man noted that the vessel could have hit anything floating, even a whale.

The sources said investigations were under way as to the exact cause of the incident.

"There is speculation that the freighter could have hit a mine or suffered an internal explosion or collided with a whale but no-one at this stage is sure," said one of the sources.

had received unconfirmed information from Saudi Arabia Sunday that an unmanned oil rig off the kingdom's northeastern coast was extensively damaged by a floating mine but that the wellhead was intact.

"Information received from Dammam, dated today states: Regarding damage to oil rig off Safaniyah. Unconfirmed information received that unmanned platform to well no. 58, Safaniyah field, (was) extensively damaged," it said.

It said the platform was "reported to have been caused by (A) floating mine. Wellhead intact."

The oil field is shared by Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Shipping sources told Reuters Friday that at least six mines were found drifting off Saudi Arabia's northern Gulf coast during December.

De Marco: Chances better for international conference for peace

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Despite firm Israeli opposition, there is an increasing international movement towards convening a peace conference on the Middle East, and the U.N. General Assembly is hopeful that such a forum could be convened soon, according to the president of the world body.

"Until recently, the United States and Israel were the only two countries not in favour of an international conference," noted Guido de Marco, who is currently visiting Jordan.

"But the Americans have expressed themselves in favour of the conference... as indicated in the recent Security Council statement," de Marco told the Jordan Times in an interview.

"Now we can say that the only state against this conference is Israel," he added.

De Marco, deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Malta, was referring to a statement that accompanied Security Council Resolution 681 issued in December.

The non-binding statement, released by the council president, had the endorsement of the U.S., one of the five permanent members, but did not specify a timeframe for convening the conference, de Marco conceded. "Nonetheless, they (the U.S.) have accepted that there should be one," he pointed out.

De Marco, who arrived here Saturday after visiting Palestinian camps in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders, said he found no change in

the Israeli opposition to the conference.

Israeli leaders restated their oft-repeated contention that an international conference would only be a forum for their country to be at the receiving end of world criticism and attack; instead, they insist on direct talks with the Arab states neighbouring the Jewish state, according to de Marco.

"The impression I did get is that the Israeli government fears that an international conference for peace would rather put them in the bar of the accused," he reported.

The Maltese diplomat, who is visiting the Middle East on his own initiative after adopting the cause of the region as a personal crusade, said he explained to the Israelis that their "concerns" were unfounded.

"The purpose of the conference is to try and bring justice to the peoples of the region," de Marco quoted himself as explaining to the Israelis.

According to de Marco, three major points should be the basis for any settlement of the Palestinian problem.

"The Palestinian people are entitled to their own right of self-determination, which includes the observance on the part of Israel of Resolution 242 — mainly evacuating the occupied territories — and also guaranteed frontiers for all states in the region," the U.N. president said.

While the U.N. accepts that direct negotiations would eventually have to be held among the parties involved, it also believes the international conference

should be convened "because of the diversity of the interests... because of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people... (and because) we also want to see the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) as an equal partner in the discussions," he said.

De Marco described the situation in the occupied territories, the site of the three-year-old Palestinian intifada, as "very sad."

The U.N. president said he was reminded of Nazi concentration camps when he visited Palestinian camps in the occupied territories.

"When you see yourself in the camps with the (Israeli) towers overlooking the camps with soldiers watching over... (it is) something we used to see in concentration camps," he said.

De Marco paid tribute to the intifada, which he said had achieved "great success," and the courage of the Palestinian people.

"Despite the immense suffering, one admires the great sense of perseverance and the great tool to move along — faith in the future — which one finds in the Palestinian people," he said.

According to de Marco, the Palestinians stand more in need of international reassurances that their cause is not forgotten rather than physical protection against Israeli practices designed to quell resistance.

The Palestinians want to feel that "the international community cares for them and is there to provide protection in a sense that their case is being monitored and would like to see stronger representation against



Guido de Marco

the violation of their human rights," he said.

"They sometimes feel that they are left alone..." de Marco added.

While being a solid supporter of the Palestinian cause, de Marco does not necessarily see a direct linkage between the Gulf crisis and the Palestinian problem.

"There is no linkage in my view between events in the Gulf and events in the occupied territories in a sense that Kuwait was not invaded by Palestinians so that the situation be relevant," de Marco said.

"In all the senses of the word, I see no linkage between both issues."

De Marco said that the Palestinians in the occupied territories were frustrated to see the speedy enactment of United Nations resolutions on Kuwait, while those on the occupied territories are ignored.

"I do know and I can understand that many in Palestine have the sense of resentment due to the fact that resolutions on Kuwait are being acted upon while resolutions on the occupied territories have not been acted upon," de Marco said.

At the same time, he said, "we hope to see that the same international determination to solve the situation in the Gulf is also shown to solve the situation as far as the Palestinian people are concerned."

"I believe that we are moving in the right direction," he added.

Americans back Bush, but dread casualties in Gulf

CHICAGO (R) — With the deadline for possible use of force in the Gulf little more than a week away, Americans seem increasingly apprehensive about committing the nation to a major war and uneasy about President George Bush's rationale.

Public opinion polls show a majority still support the administration in its demand that Iraq withdraw its forces unconditionally from Kuwait.

But support erodes swiftly when pollsters ask if American lives should be sacrificed to oust Iraq.

A recent poll by the newspaper USA Today showed that 57 per cent of Americans would support an attack, but backing would drop swiftly if U.S. casualties were to mount.

Polls by the Gallup organisation found growing opposition to the U.S. stance, with 28 per cent now seeing it as a mistake compared with 17 per cent earlier in the crisis.

"If the war did not end in a quick victory or make substantial progress in a few weeks, American popular support is so thin that the president would find he had a problem," said Tom Smith, an analyst at the University of Chicago's national Opinion Research Centre.

Support would dwindle "based on the premise and the promise that a Gulf war would be over quickly, and the administration's pledge that it would be no Vietnam."

The Vietnam war and the divisions it caused in U.S. society 20 years ago hang like a cloud over hawks and doves alike.

Those favouring a swift attack on Iraqi forces are frustrated by what they see as the Bush administration's hesitation, while peace activists fear America will not curb its arsenal if war erupts.

"That seems to be the threat, that we'd use as much force as we'd have to use. Wasn't that the military lesson of Vietnam: That we held back too much?" asked Dorothy Friesen of the Mennonite Church, one of several U.S. churches actively opposed to war in the Gulf.

Some analysts say the "win-at-costs" attitude felt to have been lacking during the United States' painful commitment in Vietnam might be affecting current attitudes about the Gulf deployment.

"People don't have to be emotionally worked up to where they aren't thinking straight, but they need to have a little more passion than they have now," Smith said. "You need to be ready to thrust the bayonet."

Peace activists report a growing number of protests, from Montana to Massachusetts. "A lot of people have been saying wait a minute," said Jennifer Bing-Canar of the National Coalition for Peace in the Middle East.

"People are really questioning our reasons for being there. Those reasons keep changing as Bush floats all these trial balloons to see what wins people people over best."

Pollsters agree that opinions on U.S. involvement shift depending on how the questions are asked.

"Bush has been a master at putting together a worldwide coalition, but in terms of selling this war to the American people he's been as ineffectual as he's been at selling many of his domestic policies," Smith said.

Partial text of Saddam's speech

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on Sunday declared the Iraqi army was ready for many sacrifices in the fight for Kuwait and to liberate Palestine but said victory was certain.

Following is a partial translation by Reuters of the original Arabic from Saddam's televised speech to mark the 70th anniversary of Iraq's Army Day.

"Our great Iraqi people, heroes of our armed forces... today has become a day to be celebrated by all Arabs. It means dignity for all Arabs because it coincides with the struggle of our Palestinian people in the occupied territories."

"Our Iraqi army stands as a symbol for their struggle and aspirations, for dignity and a better life without humiliation and oppression."

"Fortunately, this army has become capable of confronting the enemies anywhere in the Arab Homeland where there is danger. The Iraqi armed forces have an unshakable faith in their mission... in their struggle which will not stop regard-

less of the sacrifices.

"What a great honour that you are united this time under the banner of the mother of battles. You are now prepared for one historic battle after the return of the banner to the origin. The return of Kuwait is a fact and not a claim. It is the 19th province on the map of Iraq with its long history in the present and future."

"We are struggling against corruption... against decay and therefore the battle which you are waging today is the greatest of all battles... our struggle is against the foolish, tyrant American administration and its puppet, the Zionist entity and those bad people who have allied with them in an alliance of tyranny and injustice."

"Comrades in arms... the battle will entail great sacrifices in quantity and quality (but) the results will please friends and displease the foe... the battle for the liberation of Palestine will not be a short one if we are serious about it, and we don't believe that the sacrifices will be small."

"...It cannot be a battle

which could be divided into several causes... On the contrary this could cause confusion which will divide ranks because if we fight divided battles, the forces working against us could probably neutralise our efforts. But if we fight the battle as one battle, a battle which contains and embraces all the objectives of the Arabs at this particular phase, then... this is the advantage of the great battle which we will fight."

"There are facilities of a strategic nature that could not be imagined elsewhere... flow and speed in communications, mobilisation and military logistics. The mother of battles will also be (conducted) under an experienced, coherent military leadership. These are the advantages of the battle, which are free from many complications."

"It would be an honour for the believers to fight in one of the days of this battle... which aims at liberating Palestine and the Golan Heights under the banner: God is greater."

Trial of Egyptian policeman postponed

SUEZ (AP) — The trial of an Egyptian police constable accused of killing four Israelis and wounding 27 others in a cross-border shooting rampage was postponed until Tuesday.

Mohammad Wagdi Al Leithy, the president of the military court, adjourned Saturday's 12-hour session after the defendant, Ayman Mohammad Hassan, showed signs of exhaustion.

Hassan, 23, fainted for five minutes and a doctor said after examining him that he needs some rest.

The judge rejected a plea by defence lawyers that Hassan be placed under medical surveillance for 15 days for psychoanalysis.

They said Hassan is suffering from depression due to his long stay at the border post and cited that investigation had shown that he tried to commit suicide before the Nov. 25 shooting.

The court left unanswered defence plea to call Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid

to testify about the borderline as defined by the Camp David agreement that produced the 1978 treaty between Egypt and Israel.

The three-officers tribunal heard the testimony of eight colleagues of Hassan who all said they heard the shooting and saw someone running but could not recognise him.

The trial opened Dec. 22 at 3rd army headquarters, 16 kilometres west of Suez. The city is at the southern end of the Suez Canal, 135 kilometres east of Cairo. It resumed Dec. 29 but was adjourned until Saturday to allow defence lawyers more time to study the case file further.

They also requested that 44 sheets of Israeli police records in Hebrew be translated into Arabic.

The records, containing the results of Israeli inquiries, were accompanied by 'scene pictures' of the scene of the shooting, about 300 metres inside Israel, from Egypt's Sinai border.

Israelis attack Sidon bases of Palestinian groups

SIDON, Lebanon (AP) — Israeli warplanes blasted bases of Palestinian factions near Sidon Sunday. Police said at least three fighters were killed and six wounded.

It was the second reported Israeli air strike in two days, marking a sharp rise of Arab-Israeli violence in South Lebanon on the debut of 1991.

Police said six F-16 fighter bombers fired 16 rockets and dropped several delayed action bombs on the hilltop village of Shahrabil and the nearby Wadi Ahir valley, about five kilometres east of Sidon.

They said 10 rockets and four bombs exploded in the area, which is the major stronghold of Abu Nidal's Fateh Revolutionary Council faction in Lebanon.

But the major target of the attack was a base of military vehicles for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), police reported.

The one-storey base was levelled. Jeeps and other vehicles were smoldering when reporters arrived on the scene from Sidon, principal capital of South Lebanon 40 kilometres south of Beirut.

A pall of black smoke hung

over the area an hour after the jets staged two thunderous bombing sorties, drawing anti-aircraft fire from guerrilla positions. No hits were reported.

The PFLP local commander admitted six PFLP guerrillas were wounded in the attack. But he refused to confirm or deny the deaths.

"This air raid will not stop us from dealing blows to the enemy. On the contrary, we shall double our attack," he said.

Authorities said Saturday that two Israeli helicopter gunships rocketed and strafed bases of pro-Iranian fundamentalist guerrillas in the Bekaa Valley at daybreak.

No casualties were reported from that attack, which was denied by the Israeli military command.

The air assaults came amid escalating shelling duels on the ground between resistance fighters on one side and Israeli forces and allied militiamen of the South Lebanese Army (SLA) on the other.

Israel staged 21 air raids on Lebanon in 1990 in which 40 people were killed and 82 wounded, by police count.

Major flies to Gulf

LONDON (R) — British Prime Minister John Major flew to the Gulf Sunday for a four-day tour after stating categorically that Iraq would be attacked if its forces did not pull out of Kuwait.

Major, who will visit Saudi Arabia, Oman and Egypt, declined to say anything more as he left Heathrow airport. But in an interview broadcast earlier Sunday he insisted there would be no deals with Iraq.

"If (Iraq) gets out of Kuwait (it) won't be attacked, if (it) doesn't (it) will be," he said in an interview recorded two days ago for the morning TV programme Frost on Sunday.

The United Nations has authorised use of force against Iraq if its troops are still in Kuwait after Jan. 15.

Major, who replaced Margaret Thatcher as prime minister less than six weeks ago, said he was confident U.S. Secretary of State James Baker would offer no deals to Iraq during talks in Geneva Wednesday with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz.

"It is not a meeting to negotiate," he said. "You do not negotiate with someone who has broken into your house as to whether he should leave it."

"It is absolutely imperative that Saddam Hussein understands that we are serious, firstly...secondly that if he does withdraw into Iraq he is not going to be attacked within Iraq, provided he wholly and completely...leaves Kuwait."

"He has to be told those two things absolutely clearly and that, I know, is what Secretary of State Baker will say to him."

Baker was due in London later Sunday, for a Monday meeting with British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd. Baker is expected to travel on to France for talks there before his meeting with Aziz.

Major is expected to meet Gulf leaders, including members of the exiled Kuwait royal family, and to visit British troops serving with the anti-Iraq coalition forces in the region.

In the TV interview, Major said he did not believe nuclear weapons would be used by either side if war came.

I don't think it's remotely likely to come to that," he said.

Iraqis cope with food rationing 5 months into international embargo

By Dilip Ganguly
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The customs officer at Saddam International Airport looked at the passenger's bulging bag and asked: "Khubbuz?" (bread). The man nodded. The officer let him pass.

Another passenger on the Iraqi Airways flight from Jordan was pushing a trolley laden with four tyres. The officer smiled and let him pass, too.

Five months after the United Nations clamped an economic embargo against Iraq, people are coping. Although there are no signs anyone is starving, it is clear the sanctions have made life more difficult.

Jordan is Baghdad's only steady link with the rest of the world because of the United Nations' air and sea blockade in retaliation for Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion and subsequent annexation of Kuwait.

Iraqis flying in from Jordan are toting suitcases filled with sugar, tea, powdered milk, even hard-boiled eggs.

A dozen eggs cost eight dinars, or (\$21) at the official rate of exchange in Baghdad. The price is beyond the reach of most Iraqis, who earn on average the equivalent of about \$600 a month.

Also in short supply are meat, rice, beans and medicines, with the prices of all goods hiked by up to 700 per cent.

"No doubt it is hurting us. But an Arab will go hungry but never give away his honour," Information and Culture Minister Latif Jassim said of the impact of the sanctions.

Health Minister Abdul Salam Mohammad Sa'id said at least 2,042 Iraqi children below the age of five have died since August because of a lack of medicine.

"People are complaining," said a Western diplomat. "But they are complaining to themselves only. There is no sign that it will snowball into an anti-government feeling or protest, not yet."

"If you are thinking that people will come on the street shouting 'Down with Saddam,' you are wrong," said an Asian diplomat. "The time has not come for anything like that."

"And there is no way we can judge the impact of the sanctions on the Iraqi war machine until they are put to the test by a military confrontation," he added.

U.S. presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said Thursday that the United States had concluded sanctions alone would not force Iraq to withdraw from

Kuwait.

"We don't have months and days and years. We have a United Nations deadline that represents the thinking of the entire world that enough is enough. Time's up," Fitzwater said.

The U.N. Security Council authorised the use of force against Iraq if it does not leave Kuwait by Jan. 15.

U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director William Webster said Wednesday that Iraqi industry had been hard-hit, with more than 90 per cent of imports and 97 per cent of exports shut off.

But in congressional testimony he said there was no guarantee that economic hardship would lead to internal unrest or compel to change its policies.

During a 450-kilometres journey from Baghdad to the village of Judayyidat Ar'ar on the Saudi border, none of a dozen factories along the way appeared to be in operation.

Stray dogs and camels roamed outside locked cement, cigarette and fertilizer factory gates.

"They are all closed now, there is no raw material to run them," said an Iraqi official. But some food mainstays are still available at roadside desert stands.

"We still have plenty of chicken, even in the desert, to

eat and Pepsi to wash them down," said another official.

In Baghdad, a city of four million people, there are no visible shortages, except for the rationed items of rice, sugar, flour, cooking oil, beans, tea, milk powder and detergents.

Shop windows display a cornucopia of goods, which the Iraqis say are from their 19th province — Kuwait.

On sale on a recent day were green asparagus from New Zealand, luncheon meat from Holland, Swiss milk chocolate, green peas with carrots from Spain, mango pickles from India, caviar from Iran, and hot pepper sauce from the United States.

Nearly all the containers carry the markings of a Kuwaiti importer.

"We are managing," said an Iraqi father of three children. "So long as the government continues to give us subsidised food it is OK."

"But if that stops, we do not know what to do," he said on condition of anonymity.

An Iraqi adult's monthly allotment of rationed goods is 60 millilitres of tea, 730 grammes of sugar, about 1.1 kilograms of rice, a quarter kilogramme of beans and five kilogrammes of wheat.

"It is not enough, so we are trying to eat less," said the Iraqi father.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran
15:40 Programme review
15:45 Children programmes
16:00 News summary
16:10 Local programme
16:20 Programme review
16:30 News in Arabic
16:40 Arabic series
16:50 Programme review
17:00 Local programmes
17:10 News summary in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 La Camorra
18:05 News in French
18:15 Weekly Sport magazine
18:30 News in Hebrew
18:45 Varieties
18:50 The Golden Girls
19:10 The Keepers
19:20 News in English
19:30 Derrik

PRAYER TIMES

05:10 Fajr
05:32 (Sunrise) Duha
11:42 Dhuhur
14:28 'Asr
16:51 Maghrib
18:15 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetith
Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel.
632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terzian Church Tel. 623666
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel.
628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
711331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
775261.
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel.
685326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
811295.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-
Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of
Meteorology.
A depression will affect the country
Monday. Thin clouds appear at different
altitudes and there will be a
chance for scattered showers of rain, in

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Or. Mohammad Al Abdodi 778959
Dr. Tawfiq Qab'ib 623029
Dr. Majid Abu Snehel 881635
Dr. Anwar Al Ashbab 602507
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636750
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsani pharmacy 637660

IRBID:

Dr. Mahmoud Khalil (—)
Al Shams pharmacy 275825

ZARQA:

Or. Akram Haddad (—)
Khalif pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 591228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 697467
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone

REPAIRS:

Abdull Telephone Repairs 623101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636881
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/352
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Alkheh Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642562
Malhas, J. Amman 626140
Palestine, Shamsani 664171/4
Sunbeam Hospital 843845
University Hospital 667227/9
Al-Mustashfi Hospital 666127/37
The Islamic, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511/26
Army, Merka 89161/15
Queen Alia Hospital 625409/0
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

ZARQA NATIONAL HOSPITAL

(09)991071
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
DRBD:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)47100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

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Roundtable assesses Gulf crisis, consequences of war in region

AMMAN (J.T.) — The following is the full text issued by the participants at the roundtable on the Gulf crisis held at the initiative of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Jan. 5:

At the invitation of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Bin Talal, 48 statesmen, senior representatives of international organisations, and experts from various fields, gathered in Amman on January 5. Their objective was to assess the "Roundtable," was to assess the Gulf crisis, and to examine the consequences of armed conflict in the region.

The roundtable participants included His Excellency Guido de Marco, the current president of the United Nations General Assembly, and deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Malta. This one-day event was the first international event of its kind to be held in the region. Crown Prince Hassan had invited the roundtable participants to Amman because of his belief that the Gulf crisis had reached a point where innovative — and trans-national — thinking and recommendations were urgently needed to cope with the situation.

The roundtable participants stressed that the consequences of any crisis, but especially a protracted one, would be devastating in terms of human, economic, social and perhaps even environmental suffering. Jordan, which has already been hard hit by the crisis, would find itself in even greater economic and social peril.

Suffering has been generated widely in the region, and children have been among the first victims, according to a statement by UNICEF's regional representative. The Gulf crisis, according to UNICEF, has resulted in severe deterioration in

nutritional levels, and conditions involving health and primary education, in Jordan particularly. Continuation of the crisis would inflict irreversible social and related damage on future generations, said UNICEF.

Moreover, UNICEF warned, the adverse impact on children and mothers would accelerate should hostilities break out in the region. Already, almost two million third-country nationals have been forced to flee Kuwait and Iraq. They are faced with grave resettlement and economic problems in their countries of origin. If war broke out, the roundtable participants felt, almost two million additional people could leave Kuwait and Iraq, and they would enter Jordan.

It is hard to imagine how Jordan, already straining under the crushing economic burden of the Gulf crisis, could cope with this additional burden without immediate and substantial aid, according to the roundtable participants.

The roundtable participants noted that so far international contributions to alleviate Jordan's burden — and suffering — have been discouraging. Only \$12 million have been received by Jordan as reimbursement for the \$55 million that it spent to assist the more than 850,000 third country evacuees who arrived in Jordan between August and November.

This shortfall was especially discouraging in light of the \$30,000 per second that is being spent on the current military buildup.

The roundtable participants called for the establishment of a long-term fund that would foster regional economic and social stability. They suggested that a special United Nations emergency fund should be established

meanwhile. In this context, the roundtable participants have taken note of the windfall profits from oil and arms sales during the crisis. Such a fund would ensure an equitable sharing of the economic burden of the Gulf crisis. The establishment of the emergency fund would also demonstrate international solidarity in the face of human suffering caused by the Gulf crisis, and it would contribute to the establishment of a truly stable new world order.

The roundtable participants expressed concern that while the U.N. Charter clearly envisages that effective remedies should be provided to countries that suffered because of their compliance with U.N. sanctions, such remedies have not been made available to Jordan.

The time has clearly come to fashion a "second generation" United Nations that would be equipped by member states with new means and a new mandate to properly face economic and social crises of the post cold war era, the roundtable participants said.

They expressed regret that events involving the Gulf crisis have been handled in a way that suggested that people did not matter.

But people do matter, the roundtable participants declared, and nations of the world should respond accordingly when crises occurred. They said that it was appropriate that the roundtable was held in Amman since Jordan had been a major victim of the Gulf crisis. The roundtable participants noted the genuine spirit of international and humanitarian cooperation that Jordan had demonstrated during the crisis, especially concerning the plight of the hundreds of thousands of evacuees from Kuwait and Iraq.



Prime Minister Mudar Badran Sunday holds talks with Parliament's Public Freedoms and Civil Rights Committee (Petra Photo)

Meeting tackles reinstatement, political prisoners, martial law

AMMAN (J.T.) — Parliament's Public Freedoms and Civil Rights Committee met with Prime Minister Mudar Badran Sunday and discussed questions related to the reinstatement of employees barred from assuming public office because of their political orientations among other issues.

"We discussed with the prime minister the following questions: citizens dismissed from their jobs on political grounds, those who have not been appointed because of their political affiliations, citizens serving jail terms because of political reasons, questions related to martial law and citizens barred from entering Jordan," said Ahmad Al Azaideh, the committee's chairman, following the meeting.

The prime minister told Parliament on Dec. 19 that his government was determined to reinstate all those dismissed for political reasons, and noted that 68 per cent of all those who applied for reappointment had been reinstated.

These number around 372 persons out of a total of 544 who applied for reemployment in government offices, the prime minister said in his statement to Parliament.

According to Azaideh, only 45 per cent of the total number of the dismissed persons have been reinstated though the government had pledged to reinstate

all by the end of last year.

Azaideh said that his committee had submitted to the prime minister a detailed report of the situation revealing that those returned to their posts do not enjoy the same privileges and rights like their colleagues while those dismissed from their work in the private sector had not been reinstated at all.

Agreement was reached with the prime minister for the dismissed persons to be reinstated and for those already employed to be fairly treated.

Agreement was reached on studying the cases of all persons serving jail terms and improving conditions in jails and allowing more freedoms for visitors, according to Azaideh. He said that the government had promised to consider issuing special pardon for those jailed for political reasons.

The prime minister said that he would give clear instructions to the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to take measures designed to ensure the reinstatement of all the employees dismissed from their jobs for political reasons.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Badran also stressed that the government was committed to cancelling the martial law and announced that the government, in the coming few days, would announce extra measures in this regard.

Badran welcomes U.N. call for peace conference

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Mudar Badran Sunday welcomed a recent decision by the United States General Assembly, calling for an international conference on the Palestine issue, as a step in the right direction.

Speaking at a meeting with visiting President of the U.N. General Assembly Guido de Marco, the prime minister expressed concern over the continued influx of Soviet Jews in occupied Palestine and the settlement of large numbers of them in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Badran, whose views were supported by de Marco, said that the influx of the Jews was bound to escalate tension in the region.

Badran and de Marco called for speeding up efforts to find a lasting settlement to the Palestine problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The prime minister reviewed with de Marco the current situation in the occupied Arab territories and Israel's inhuman practices against the Palestinian people. He said that an international peace conference was of paramount importance now to end the tension and the sufferings of the Palestinian people.

"The sooner this conference is held the better for all the peoples of the Middle East who aspire for peace and security," the prime minister said.

Badran told de Marco that Jordan was sharing with the Palestinians their sufferings and was trying to help the oppressed people in every possible manner.

The Palestinian intifada, the prime minister said, is only an expression of the suffering of a people under occupation and oppression and a manifestation of the prolonged struggle to acquire legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination.

"The whole international community should bear the re-

sponsibility for the present dangerous situation," he added.

De Marco lauded the government's efforts to help the Palestinian refugees and stressed the importance of the United Nations' role through the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in providing assistance and training to the refugees' children.

The meeting was attended by UNRWA Commissioner General Giorgio Giacomelli, Minister of Information Ibrahim Izzeddin, U.N. officials in Jordan and Dr. Ahmad Qatanani, director general of the Foreign Ministry's Department of Palestinian Affairs.

Following the meeting with the prime minister, de Marco said that his talks with Jordanian officials were extremely useful and constructive, and that Jordan's views with regard to the region's questions were similar to those of the United Nations on these matters.

He told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the situation in the occupied Arab lands was dangerous and required speedy efforts and due attention on the part of the world community.

He said extra efforts were needed to convene a U.N. sponsored international conference to reach peace in the Middle East region and to end the ordeal of the Palestinian people.

De Marco Monday winds up his three-day visit to Jordan and leaves for Cairo on the third leg of his current Middle Eastern tour.

De Marco Sunday made a tour of the Jerash refugee camp and the archaeological sites of the ancient Greco Roman city after inspecting a vocational training centre at Wadi Seer near Amman which offers training to Palestinian refugees.

Accompanied by the UNRWA commissioner general, de

Marco toured the various part of the centre, west of here, and heard a briefing on the various courses offered to the trainees. De Marco expressed appreciation of the work conducted by UNRWA in Jordan and of its health and educational services to the Palestinian refugees.

An estimated 912,000 Palestinians are registered in UNRWA's documents in Jordan and their children receive education and vocational training at the agency's centres around the country.

In addition to the vocational training centre, UNRWA runs a teacher's training centre at Naour and its 196 schools in Jordan offer education to some 135,000 male and female students.

In addition, the agency operates 20 health centres, eight units to teach women dress making skills, seven centres for handicraft activities for women and five centres for the care of the handicapped refugee children.

Agency sources said that UNRWA employees from 6,000 people to run its schools, health centres and administrative office.

De Marco, who toured a number of Palestinian refugee camps in the occupied West Bank, said in a statement here Saturday that one of his first recommendations to the United Nations secretary general would be a stronger recognition of the work of the financially troubled UNRWA in the occupied Arab areas.

The situation in the refugee camps in general was discussed by de Marco at a meeting with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan the Regent Saturday. The Regent called on de Marco, who is also Malta's foreign minister, to urge the United Nations to intensify efforts for resolving the Palestine problem.

Over 1,400 Vietnamese evacuated through Jordan; thousands to come

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A steady flow of Vietnamese nationals evacuated from Iraq is continuing through Jordan, with 1,462 of them flown home from Amman since Jan. 2, relief agency officials said Sunday.

With the arrival overnight and early Sunday of 794 Vietnamese across Al Ruweished border post, a total of 956 remained at the transit camp in Azraq, about 100 kilometres northwest of Amman, said Luca Aiolfi, chief of mission of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Jordan.

Aiolfi said his organisation expected another 2,500 Vietnamese to arrive here in the next few days and that all of them would be flown home aboard flights chartered by IOM.

No flights were scheduled Sunday after a charter jetliner carrying about 200 Vietnamese took off for Hanoi in the early hours of the day, said another relief official.

According to reports in the Hanoi media, about 16,300 Vietnamese were working in Iraq on government contracts when Iraq invaded Kuwait Aug. 2.

About 9,000 of them have already returned home, most of

them through Turkey. With the expected evacuation of 5,000 through Jordan, including those who left since Jan. 2, that leaves about 2,500 remaining in Iraq. No one was able to give any clue to why they were staying back. Vietnam has no diplomatic representation in Amman.

The evacuation process is handled by various international organisations, including the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, and local agencies such as Red Crescent and the national Evacuee Welfare Committee.

In addition to the Vietnamese, there are "individual movements" of evacuees from Kuwait and Iraq, said Aiolfi of the IOM.

"But these are negligible, with less than 10 or 12 in each group," he said.

The IOM charters flights wherever the number of evacuees warrants them or gives the evacuees tickets on regular airlines when the numbers are small.

The bulk of the Asian expatriate community in pre-invasion Kuwait — Indians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, Filipinos and Bangladeshis — has already left.

Asian embassies in Amman confirmed that there was only a small trickle of their nationals passing through Jordan.

"As things stand today, we are

not expecting any major wave of evacuees, other than the Vietnamese," Aiolfi said. But the situation could change in the event of a military conflict erupting in the Gulf.

Seven hundred and forty-seven Sudanese were flown home last week and 112 others arrived Saturday morning, Aiolfi told the Jordan Times.

According to diplomatic sources in Baghdad, the latest departures of Vietnamese need not necessarily mean that the work contracts have been completed.

"There are reasons related to Iraqi payments to the contract workers," said one source. "In addition, the Vietnamese find it difficult to obtain their staple diet — rice," added the source.

In October, the Vietnamese were given rice and other food items from part of a shipment sent to Iraq by India, which had the highest number of Asian expatriate community in Kuwait. The shipment was sent after obtaining permission from the United Nations Sanctions Committee.

Over 135,000 evacuees have been flown home through Jordan by the IOM, which is directly in charge of the process, which is financed by international contributions.

Gas turbines at Al Rishah to boost energy production

AMMAN (J.T.) The Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) is going ahead with plans to install two gas-powered turbines in the Rishah district near the Iraqi border to boost the country's electricity produced from the gas extracted at Al Rishah gas fields, according to JEA Director General Mohammad Saeed Arafeh.

Arafeh told the Jordan Times that JEA had received bids from various world firms wishing to provide turbines for the project and was now studying the offers. "At the same time, JEA is also weighing the best offer for the cost of moving two gas powered turbines already installed at a point south of Amman to the Rishah area before deciding on the most economically feasible option to carry out the project," Arafeh said.

According to engineer Abdul Wahhab Al Zoubi, head of JEA's Projects Department, there is urgent need to install the turbines at the Rishah fields in view of Jordan's increasing demand on energy resources and to cut on imported oil and other fuel under the present difficult circumstances resulting from the Gulf crisis.

Zoubi said that once the two turbines have been installed, gas will be producing nearly 25 per cent of the total amount of electricity needed in the Kingdom, cutting at least JD 15 million from the country's annual oil fuel bill.

Zoubi said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the cost of installing the two turbines would be covered through loans from Japan and Germany as well as other European nations.

Currently two gas-driven tur-

hines are producing nearly 15 per cent of the country's needs, saving the country up to \$10 million worth of energy fuel a year.

Last February a Canadian energy expert working for the Petro Canada International Assistance Corporation said that estimates of gas reserves at Al Rishah field had risen to 500 billion cubic feet and might go higher.

Natural Resources Authority (NRA) Director General Kamal Jreisat said last July that Al Rishah gas fields produced some 22 million cubic feet of natural gas on a daily basis, part of which is being used to produce electricity.

In addition to exploiting gas at Al Rishah fields to save energy fuel, the series of energy conservation measures introduced by the government in October 1990 are said to have their share in cutting down on fuel consumption.

The JEA director said that his department had received very encouraging reports about savings in fuel and a detailed report is to be submitted to the prime minister soon.

Arafeh had said in October that the measures were bound to save the country some 3,550 tonnes of fuel accounting for nearly 1.5 per cent of the total fuel consumption in the Kingdom and six per cent of the total electricity consumption.

The government had decided that government departments should have a two-day weekend to cut down on energy and fuel used in building and transport. It also decided that commercial businesses should cut on their working hours.

No powdered milk to be used in dairy products

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Agriculture Mohammad Alawneh decided Sunday to totally ban the use of powdered milk in dairy factories because of the surplus in the locally produced fresh milk.

In a press conference held at the ministry, Alawneh said the decision was taken following a meeting held earlier in the day. The meeting was attended by the ministry's secretary general, representatives of the dairy factories, the Jordan Cooperative Society, the Ministry of Supply and farmers.

Alawneh said cow breeders were unable to market all their

produce of locally produced milk.

Alawneh said the ministry had bought all the stored quantities of powdered milk in the stores of the factories and paid for them in cash in order to make it possible for the factories to buy all the fresh milk in the market.

The ministry will sell these quantities of powdered milk to other food factories, he said.

He said the ministry was working currently on increasing the sources of fresh milk in the Kingdom.

The dispute between farmers and the dairy factories began in 1989



Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arabiyat Sunday holds talks with Richard Murphy, former U.S. assistant secretary of state (Petra photo)

House speaker, ex-U.S. troubleshooter agree on need for extra international efforts for peaceful settlement

Arabiyat, Murphy review situation in the region

AMMAN (J.T.) — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arabiyat Sunday described the situation in the Middle East and the Gulf as most dangerous and critical and said that the peoples of the region are highly fearful of the outcome of a military conflict.

"The peoples of the region view the presence of military forces and foreign troops as constituting a real threat and serving as foreign military bases, not serving their interests," said Arabiyat at a meeting with Richard Murphy, former U.S. assistant secretary of state.

Murphy, who came here to take part in Saturday's roundtable conference at the invitation of His Royal Highness Prince

Hassan, the Regent, reviewed with Arabiyat the present situation in the region and heard the House speaker call for urgent and courageous efforts to reach peace in the Gulf.

Arabiyat said that "His Majesty the King is currently making a last ditch effort in Europe to save the region from catastrophic wars."

A statement following the meeting said that Murphy and Arabiyat had agreed on the need for extra efforts on the international arena to find a peaceful settlement within the Arab framework and with the assistance of friendly nations.

The meeting was attended by the U.S. ambassador to Jordan.

Meanwhile Arabiyat said Sunday that he had received a copy of deliberations of the fourth meeting of the Soviet Union's People's Assembly held last month. "The resolutions and final statement issued at the end of the meeting expressed deep concern over the development of the dangerous situation in the Gulf region and stressed the Soviet Union's support for peaceful solutions," Arabiyat said.

He said that the assembly's meeting demanded that the Soviet leadership and the Supreme Soviet remain in constant contact with the developments and back all efforts aiming at attaining a peaceful settlement.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Hassan, Badran hold talks

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday visited the Prime Ministry where he met Prime Minister Mudar Badran. Prince Hassan and Badran discussed local and external issues in the light of the latest developments in the region. The Crown Prince gave his directives on several issues of interest to Jordan, its people, as well as the Arab Nation.

Saralreh meets ministry director's

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Transport and Communications Jamal Al Saralreh met Sunday the directors of the ministry's corporations. Saralreh briefed them on the challenges facing the Kingdom and stressed the importance of cooperation and coordination among the ministry's various departments. He also discussed with them the consequences of implementing the civil service law in some institutions and reviewed the activities and programmes of their various departments for the year 1991.

Seminar to review development issues

AMMAN (Petra) — A three-day seminar entitled "Development in an Islamic Perspective" will be held in Amman on Jan. 20, 1991. The seminar, which is organised by the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research — Al Al Bait Foundation — and the Islamic Institute for Researches and Training of the Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank, will discuss several issues related to development. The Royal Academy will hold another economic seminar in Amman in the period between Feb. 5 and 7 in cooperation with the Rabat-based Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO). The seminar will deal with the issue of distribution of wealth in the Islamic economic system, the issue of social security and social cooperation.

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Jordanian-Syrian Land Transport Co. Invites

Contractors to participate in tender No. 1/91 for supply of spare parts for its Mercedes trucks type (L&LS 2624) as per part numbers and quantities attached with terms of tender.

Contractors wishing to bid for tender can obtain copies of tender documents from the company in Jabal Al-Husseini — behind Ministry of Health — opposite Al-Fadel Ibn Abbas Mosque — Amman for a non-refundable fee of JD 160,000 (One hundred and sixty Jordan Dinars) per a copy, bearing official documents proving their registration in records of trading agents.

Offers should be submitted not later than 2.30 p.m. (local Jordan Time) on Wednesday February 6th, 1991.

Hisham Asfour
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Weekly Political Pulse

The day after futuristic

THE Baker-Aziz impending talks have naturally generated much optimism that a diplomatic breakthrough over the Kuwaiti crisis is still attainable inspite of all the gloom surrounding the Gulf conflict. In conjunction with the European Community's determination to intervene at the last hour to save the world from an apocalyptic scenario, that would devastate man and his environment, the U.S.-Iraqi negotiations offer additional opportunities for peace in the area.

While pinning much hope on the projected discussions between the two sides to the conflict, there remains the haunting fear that once the dust settles, another type of conflict will most certainly come to the fore among the antagonists in the region, albeit in a more concealed manner. One has got to be euphoric to the point of naivety to believe that the end of the U.S.-Iraqi armed hostility would also put an end to the undercurrent feuds that run so deeply between Iraq and its neighbours. Baghdad cannot be expected to forget and forgive so easily all its neighbours which poised their forces in an offensive manner against it during the Kuwaiti crisis. There is going to be many scores to settle between it and its next door states which manifested a great deal of hostility towards it when the going was tough. Obviously, things will never be the same between Baghdad and Ankara or between Iraq on the one hand and Syria and Egypt on the other. This is not to mention the deep wounds that developed between Iraq and Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Gulf states with the possible exception of Oman.

What would ensue from these undercurrent confrontations would of course be open to conjecture at this time. Most likely each side will aim to destabilise the regimes of the other. In the

process heads may roll and one coup after the other may occur in one country or another. On the economic level, the confrontations between Iraq and its neighbours will most probably take a more onward appearance. The beyday in economic cooperation between Turkey and Iraq, for example, will be eroded considerably and become the first casualty of the deteriorating Iraqi-Turkish relations. The future of the two pipelines carrying Iraqi oil across Turkey will obviously be among the early casualties of this deterioration in relations to be followed by economic war between the two countries. The oil war between Iraq and the rest of the Arab Gulf countries is also projected to assume ominous proportions. OPEC as the world knows today may very well end up undermined.

The moral of the story is that peace in the region is not going to happen simply by formal peace and security arrangements between Iraq and its neighbours. Much more needs to be done to address the simmering wounds that erupted between them in an effort to heal them effectively and permanently. Much time will also be required in order to reestablish confidence between Iraq and its neighbouring states. Even more relevant is the need for vision and far sight in restructuring the future relations between Iraq and its neighbours. On Iraq's futuristic relations with the Arab regimes that joined forces with Washington in preparation for a military strike against it, wishful thinking and pious protestations would never be sufficient to put the Arab order on the right path again. Not that the Arab order was ever on the right path. Yet the return to "normalcy" in inter-Arab relations would be the first step towards a genuine transformation in inter-Arab relations. In

this vein, what would be the most urgent requirement is the re-construction of confidence-building blocks to cement the new order within the Arab World. For this purpose, there would be a need to visualise a conceptual framework for the future relations in the Arab Nation. Such a visionary outlook must embody a union form between the Arab countries that is on par with the evolving changes in the world. To begin with, Iraq needs to be accommodated within the Gulf Cooperation Council. Secondly, the Arab Cooperation Council needs to be restructured after it has proved its futility in the face of the first test. It would be ridiculous to think in terms of resuscitating it from death after the dust settles. Thirdly, Egypt in fact belongs more to the North African Arab states tier as well as to the Middle East region. Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq compose a separate Arab subgrouping that warrants a special edifice for them as well. With Iraq occupying a pivotal place within the Gulf Cooperation Council, its additional place within the Middle East Arab states formation would offer it an opportunity to be the link that unites the Middle East Arab grouping with that of the Gulf region. Egypt can play a similar role by becoming the link that joins the Arab Maghreb with the Middle East.

As important as these considerations are, the restoration of faith and trust among the Arab countries would require the introduction of democratic rule to them. True and operational democracy is the only permanent way to bring genuine harmony once again to the Arab fold. Only through democratisation there can be peace between the Arab countries because through it the Arab peoples would be the final arbiters.

People — the first priority

THE ROUNDTABLE held in Amman Saturday under the chairmanship of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan ended with an appeal to the international community to look more closely at the humanitarian aspects of the Gulf crisis. The impact of the Kuwaiti conflict on man and his well-being has gone unnoticed for long, especially by the parties that are preparing for war and destruction in the Gulf region. Being the most hit by demographic pressures and the interruption of its economic life lines as a consequence of the war hysteria in the area, Jordan has been well placed to host such a timely conference. In his keynote speech to the group of eminent international personalities from different walks of life, the Crown Prince poignantly reminded that Jordan's traditional and much acclaimed posture of "terra media" in a sea of hot spots and extremism is being wantonly undermined by the neglect of the humanitarian dimensions of the deteriorating situations in the Gulf region as well as in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Much aid has been promised to Jordan since the flood of evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait began to pour into the Kingdom in August but very little has in fact been received. With the drums of war beating more loudly than ever in the Gulf area, there is clearly a renewed fear that hundreds of thousands of people would opt to escape the wrath of war and seek temporary asylum in Jordan. Given the ill-preparedness of the world to cope with the stampede of peoples across the Jordanian-Iraqi border in the past, unless there is now a ready mechanism to deal with such an eventuality the dimensions of the next surge of refugees on Jordan would simply be unbearable.

With Jordan's economic woes increasing as a direct consequence of the Gulf situation, there is but one solution left to deal with the impacts of the Kuwaiti conflict on Jordan and other similarly affected countries in the Middle East. To establish a long-term international fund to foster stability and security in the Middle East and an interim fund to assist Jordan in coping with the extraordinary burdens being placed on its already overburdened shoulders.

Perhaps the pivotal capitals of the world are simply too preoccupied with war and all the time preparing for it to stop and listen to the deliberations and recommendations of the Amman roundtable. This one-track-minded perspective would further erode the moral dimension of the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq. By stopping to care for man and his environment while vehemently pursuing raw power politics in the Gulf theatre, the power centres of the world have in effect declared wide open the bankruptcy of their objectives. This behaviour can only contribute to the principal players in the Gulf situation earning the contempt and long-term hostility from the peoples of the Middle East who are projected to be the first casualties of world insensitivities for the welfare and well-being of the countries and peoples of the area.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i Arabic daily Sunday urged the European Community countries to speed up efforts for convening an international conference on the Middle East because, it said, this move is bound to pave the way for a successful meeting between the foreign ministers of the United States and Iraq in Geneva on Jan. 9. The paper said that such a move to convene an international conference can also be conducive to establishing peace in the occupied Arab territories where Israel should be prevented from carrying out further atrocities. The paper said that helping the Americans and the Iraqis to reach a settlement over the Gulf issue is urgent now in the wake of President Bush's statement that his secretary of state would only present Tariq Aziz with a final ultimatum to Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. The eyes of the world are now turned to Geneva to watch the outcome of the meeting and it would be catastrophic if the United States was going there only to deliver a threat rather than conduct peace negotiations, the paper noted. Washington would be bearing a heavy responsibility before the American public should it deliver a threat to the Iraqis without trying to negotiate with them over the crisis and means to attain peace, the paper continued. But, it said, that the Europeans should not leave the matter to rest there and allow the Americans to have total hegemony on the issue, but should rather take the initiative and pave the way for peace based on justice.

Savri Al Shaab daily echoed Crown Prince Hassao's views at the round-table conference and the press conference he gave following the meeting in which he stressed the need for the Geneva meeting between the foreign ministers of Iraq and the United States to be based on the concept of defusing the Gulf crisis. The paper said that this rests more or less with the U.S. administration which has not displayed any flexibility so far, and which has proved determined to pursue its aggressive attitude instead of showing tendency towards peace. The American president, the paper noted, should heed advice given to him by former British Prime Minister Edward Heath and members of his Congress who oppose the idea of war and who realise its catastrophic consequences on the United States. While the whole world is now directing its attention towards Geneva, the Iraqi leadership is hoping that the parley in Switzerland would be open and constructive so that real peace can be achieved, said the paper. But should the United States pursue its aggressive stand and should Bush ignore all pieces of advice from all sources, then the coming meeting would not be given the necessary climate for success, the paper added. It said that if the Bush administration wants to succeed, it must not hold on to its obstinacy and should show respect for the readiness to help implement U.N. Security Council resolutions concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as those pertaining to the Gulf.



Americans want priority for home problems

By Tom Wicker

ROCHESTER, Vermont — Despite a flood of Christmas sentimentality about "the kids over there" (this time including women), little appetite for war in the Middle East can be found among the American people; quite the opposite.

Americans, it seems to me, are deeply troubled by the sheer incongruity of mounting a huge military operation abroad, the necessary purpose of which remains unclear, while the economy deteriorates at home, our children go begging the shooting, crime spirals upward, the schools educate poorly if at all, million neither have nor can afford medical care and bridges fall down on the homeless sleeping beneath them.

A sampling of holiday domestic news makes the point:

Dec. 20 — The Commerce Department revised its estimate of third quarter growth in GNP from 1.7 per cent to an anemic 1.4 per cent. The

fourth quarter will be worse.

Dec. 21 — In 1990, the New York metropolitan area lost about 100,000 private industry jobs, according to a federal survey. Three more of the nation's largest banks reported millions in bad loan write-offs or dividend reductions. For 1991, U.S. businesses plan to expand spending by only 0.4 per cent, the least in five years.

Dec. 22 — The senior economist of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board said it would take three to five years for growth to resume in New York City. U.S. health care spending was announced to have reached \$804 billion last year, but although the law requires lead-poisoning tests for all the nation's 12 million poor children, only a third actually are being tested.

Dec. 23 — In Washington, five children, one only 6 years old, were shot by other youngsters from a passing car;

there have been 471 homicides in the city this year. The federal budget office sought about \$1 billion in reductions in aid to mass transit, despite a recent increase in the gasoline tax.

Dec. 24 — Experts said the health of Americans in the inner cities had deteriorated to "critical condition," while the rest of us are healthier and living longer. Even the television networks suffered one of their worst years; all lost market share, and CBS announced a fourth quarter loss.

Dec. 25 — Retailers reported "the poorest Christmas season in years" as shoppers didn't show up. Signs of the first U.S. price deflation since the 1940s also were reported — bad signs for a government, businesses and people burdened with debt.

Dec. 26 — Further signaling recession, a wide spectrum of American manufacturers,

caught in a price squeeze, are deferring plans to modernise and expand. Some are laying off employees.

And on and on. It is true that spending for another war might provide stimulus to a sick economy. But that is not only a distasteful way to prime the pump; it is inefficient, in lives and money. Already the Pentagon is bawling to pay premium prices — sometimes twice standard rates — for shipping space to the Gulf.

Anyway, it is not just economic problems but values that trouble Americans as Jan. 15 nears. In Britain in 1939, leaders sought "peace in our time" and shrank from a war to defend a people "of whom we know little." Now, in ironic reversal, many Americans sense that their most pressing problems are at home, largely unattended by leaders in the fatal grip of superpower, illusions, who hasten them into ill-considered war — The New York Times.

Contempt breeds hatred

By Khaled Mahadin

IT seems that I had failed to express my views clearly in my earlier article published on Jan. 1, 1991 under the title of "A Horrifying Beautiful Idea." Numerous telephone calls and different contacts with me proved that readers had misunderstood what I had meant to express in that article in which I voiced my belief that Jordanian parents and sons alike have been filled with hatred towards all that is British or American. I went back to my article and found that it did not present the idea which I had in mind; and perhaps this failure was behind the outcry raised about the article, especially among foreign nationals living in Jordan.

What I meant to say in that article is that we Jordanians constitute part of the Arab Nation and believe in amity and affection as a real foundation and a true concept for dealings among members of the human family. For this reason, we had never been accused at any time in the past of being vindictive racists nor are we so now, although we are horrified by certain feelings crowding into our minds as a result of the handling by Washington and London of the Gulf crisis reflecting Western contempt of the Arabs who they wish to humiliate and destroy.

What deepened the feeling of offence is the fact that while the Palestinians are being massacred in cold blood the so-called civilised world continues to turn a blind eye to the plight of the Palestinians, but focuses attention only on the Gulf issue, insisting on pursuing all endeavours to render Iraqi children a prey to death and starvation by maintaining an embargo on Iraq depriving its children of milk and medicine. Furthermore, the non-stop barrage of statements and the escalated shameful campaign directed against our homeland and our nation has helped to fill us with hatred, simply because the West continues to adopt a double standard policy towards the Gulf and Palestine. Such hatred, caused by the West's hostile attitude towards us, could create "a psychological defect" in our children who are supposed to be raised in a pure atmosphere of affection and innocence.

For us in Jordan, we feel that the whole situation is a source of concern because we have always treated our guests of foreign nationals with affection and care — a state of affairs which I am sure will remain unchanged. But we feel that it is our right to be cautious and keep a watchful eye against "the phenomena of malice" which I referred to in my previous article, and also keep a watchful eye on those who are lying in wait for us trying to do us harm or to mar our image or disturb our stability and abuse our natural hospitality and our keenness to protect and give care to our guests.

Like other Jordanians, I feel that the Western enmity is directed towards the Arab Nation and its causes; and this enmity is directed particularly through the majority of politicians in London and Washington and a number of other hostile capitals in the West. I also realise that peoples do not harbour feelings of malice or hatred or racism; and the anti-war protests and demonstrations being staged in American, British and European cities serve as a manifestation of a rejection of aggression and the idea of war; and that they display a desire for peace and love among nations of the world.

I admit once again that my previous article had failed to express my ideas and thoughts which I consider as very serious and causing concern. But I am sure of the fact that the Jordanian people who have always been characterised with the noblest human nature will remain generous and hospitable, and will continue to provide all protection to Jordan's guests.

Editors Note: In his previous article the writer cited a number of letters he received from members of the public expressing strong sentiments of hatred towards American and Britain for their resentful attitude towards the Arab Nation.

LETTERS

Beyond propaganda

To the editor:

AMID the rhetoric and hypocrisy of the U.S. invasion of the Gulf area one senses two things: First, the U.S. is constantly inconsistent and second, this is an unmistakable aura of an empire in decline. While Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev allowed Stalinism in Eastern Europe to unravel, President Bush's henchmen chose Christmas time to counteract the alleged transgressions of President Saddam of Iraq.

For some years Gen. Noriega was the U.S.' man in Panama and when the U.S. no longer wanted him he refused to leave quietly, so the U.S. sent in troops to remove him. The cost to the U.S. in lives and wealth was great. What transpires from that is the need for Americans to state their clear objectives in Central America and many congressmen stated publicly that "it should be to achieve political stability and self-determination, with an emphasis on promoting democracy." Applying these standards to the Gulf area one cannot help but laugh. The United States should use its influence to see that peace processes proceed and not war. It also should treat the Gulf countries as friends and distant neighbours to aid and help them to develop their economic and political systems while refraining from interference in their

internal affairs.

There is little wisdom in the western tactic of sanctions and blockade which puts a gun to the head of a whole national economy, and in the threat of an oil cut-off, which poses a similar threat to the economy of the West. This automatically will lead to the conclusion that only mad people will decide to go for war. The high technology, beginning 500 years ago with the cannon, accelerating in the 19th century and culminating with nuclear weapons and ICBMs, prohibits the thinking of a just-war. The personalising of war and its effects through the mass media is becoming a very important factor in war decision. Jeff Smith who teaches at UCLA and is the author of "Unthinking the Unthinkable: Nuclear Weapons and Western Culture" says that the media in the U.S. "especially TV" are pretty poor at "zooming out" from the present situation and presenting the big picture, but they are excellent at "zooming in" to give us dramatic close-ups of the victims of conflicts, the charred wreckage of a failed helicopter raid of GIs held away from their homes.

In a chess game pawns on both sides thrust forward first, while bishops, knights and Queens manoeuvre at the rear. The mere fact that Iraq plays with the big boys convey the impression that all participants in the game want to stay off balance as long as possible with the best solution for the crisis being "no solution."

The Middle East's future is bleak. And no matter what happens "war or peace", the masses in the area will certainly not wave American flags they just might be burning them.

Dr. Esam Shannag
Yarmouk University
Irbid

Allah's world is coming

To the Editor:

THE end, as everybody can see, is approaching fast. The point of contention is whose world is this. America, driven by dark Talmudic thought and Judeo-Christian racism, wants to dictate the agenda. But by the nature of things this can no longer be accepted. The rest of the world says no to George Bush even marching the forces of the puppet regimes say yes and come stupid armadas and repetitive move syllables. And no to the binself. And last but not least, no to their master-puppet Israel which they created and worshipped and to which they can say no them by the day.

Saddam Hussein has been able to bare the hypocrites for all to see. The immorality of America's world order is finally exposed and it cannot stand the test. A new world order is passionately needed at least to rid the arrogant of their suffering. If George Bush and company wants to bring the temple down on their heads, let it be. No one can save them. Their world does not deserve to be lived in. Allah promised humanity a different world. And mark my word: It shall be soon coming!

Ibrahim Abu Nab
Amman

'American go home'

By Jeremy Wagstaff
Reuters

HANOI — In a backyard of Hanoi's 103 military hospital, servicemen driven insane during decades of the war against the United States, Cambodia or China wander among the flowerheda, dressed in dirty white uniforms.

"I feel like I am with a happy family here," said Nguyen Xuan Thanh, who has not slept or eaten properly since he was wounded in the head by an exploding shell in Cambodia in 1984. "When I do sleep, I dream I am back in Cambodia, back in the fighting."

His handshake goes on for minutes. His legs shake constantly.

The hospital is quiet, clean and bare. There are no screams, just the occasional shout or the sound of a rich haritone voice bursting into spontaneous song.

Vietnam has had more than its fair share of wars. A brief lull after the communist victory in South Vietnam in 1975 was shattered three years later by inter-necine conflict with Hanoi's former brothers-in-arms, the Khmer Rouge.

The Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1978 removed Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge from power but started a guerrilla war which is still going on. Vietnam formally withdrew its forces in 1989. Relatives of soldiers unable to

readapt to civilian life rarely talk about the problems. One, who asked not to be named, said his brother-in-law had been thrown out of his home by a family unable to live with his violent outbursts and paranoia.

The last she heard of him was that he had built a 1.8-metre wall around his shack and was refusing to see all visitors.

Dr. Nguyen Phung, who has worked at 103's mental ward for 20 years, said there were many clinically ill men who had not been treated.

"We cannot hope to treat them all," he said. "We still have those patients whom we cannot cure. We can do nothing for them."

No humanitarian organisations fund the hospital, Vietnam's largest mental home for servicemen.

Treatment is therefore kept simple. Phung emphasises natural medical treatment like reflexology and acupuncture alongside simple group therapy techniques. Few patients are sedated.

The mental scars nursed at the hospital run as deep as those of America's Vietnam veterans portrayed in the films "The Deer Hunter" and "Born On The Fourth Of July."

"War is war. Vietnamese soldiers may have a slightly different mental approach because they won the war but there are still those who cannot recover

from what they have seen or done," said Phung, wearing army fatigues under his white doctor's coat.

On one of the quiet whitewashed verandahs of the hospital, Le Xuan Duc speaks through his tears about the experience 23 years ago which destroyed his life.

On Christmas Day, 1967, while working as a border guard in his village in Thanh Hoa Province, Duc emerged from his house to go fishing. Moments later U.S. planes bombed the village, killing his family and leaving him a mental wreck.

There are only 60 beds in the hospital, hard iron frames softened by a thin layer of foam rubber. Patients are usually discharged after two months, Phung said. Three hundred patients are treated a year.

Victims of chemical weapons used by the American forces are also treated for related mental illness.

Nguyen Khoa Diem was 19 when in February 1975, two months before the war ended, he was exposed to chemicals unleashed by fleeing forces of the Saigon government. He has been in and out of hospitals, but has not been home since.

"I can't have children," he said as he wandered slowly

around the yard, looking intently at the flowers.

Not being able to have normal relations with his wife consumes his mind, Phung said.

There is little of the stigma which faced American servicemen returning from the Vietnam war.

But amid the country's continuing poverty and diplomatic isolation, few people can afford sympathy for sufferers of an illness they do not understand.

"They are not outcasts here. But our budget is small. We cannot afford to be too kind," said hospital vice-director Dr. Thai Hong Quang. "Please explain to the world that we need more help in our work."

As the afternoon shadows grow, the ward settles after the excitement of its first visit by a Western journalist.

Among the patients who sing, do exercises or learn English, weave straw mats or sleep, there is only a hint of the trauma underneath.

One patient sits shuddering violently. Another liable to attack others or attempt suicide, is kept under permanent watch.

In the courtyard outside, a youth agitated by the presence of a foreigner walks up and down quickly, shouting: "American go home."

Saddam

(Continued from page 1)

cause confusion which will divide ranks," he said.

He said Iraq was pitted against the "U.S. administration, its puppet Zionist entity and those bad people who have allied with them."

Saddam also touched on Iraq's preparations for battle and spoke of an unprecedented marshalling of resources.

"There are facilities of strategic nature that could not be imagined elsewhere — flow and speed in communications, mobilisation and military logistics."

"The mother of battles will also be (conducted) under an experienced, cohesive military leadership. These are the many advantages of the battle, which are free of many complications."

"It would be an honour for the believers to fight on one of the days of this battle... which aims at liberating Palestine and the Golan Heights under the banner: God is greater," he said. (See excerpts of Saddam's speech on page 2).

Iraq's army leaders pledged loyalty to President Saddam.

"We will teach the enemies of Iraq, the nation, and mankind unforgettable lessons," the Iraqi News Agency (INA) quoted the Seventh Corps Commander as telling the Iraqi leader in an army day salute.

In Haifa Al Batin, Saudi Arabia, King Fahd said meanwhile he shared Bush's "gut instinct" that Iraq would pull out of Kuwait.

The king, in a rare, impromptu meeting with reporters, also appeared to offer Baghdad an incentive, by saying that Iraq might escape "international punishment" if it left Kuwait peacefully.

King Fahd, seated in a traditional bedouin tent pitched in the wending flatness of the northern Arabian desert, said if Saddam left Kuwait peacefully "it would be in his favour."

"It will make matters easy... maybe without any further punishment," he said.

"And always there is a way to negotiate and talk and make agreements in the future so things like (those) which happened now will not be repeated," he continued.

The Saudi monarch made his comments during a review of more than 5,000 troops from the international forces arrayed near the Kuwaiti border.

Accompanying King Fahd in a

display of solidarity were most of the top military commanders for the multinational force. They included Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz, U.S. Army General Norman Schwarzkopf, head of the American forces in the Gulf, and his British counterpart, Lieutenant-General Sir Peter de la Billiere.

The visit was the king's first to the multinational force.

"I do share with President Bush his instinct and his hope," the Saudi monarch said when asked about Bush's recent comment that his "gut instinct" was that Iraq would leave Kuwait without a fight.

The Saudi leader, speaking through an interpreter, said Iraq's departure from Kuwait remained a precondition for negotiations.

But withdrawal could be the basis for a settlement of grievances between Iraq and Kuwait.

"If there is any demand by Iraq to Kuwait, the two countries should sit together and discuss it between themselves, and whatever they agree on we will support," he said.

"If they want us to intervene in any way and be part of any negotiations we will be happy to do that," the king said.

The king said he was pleased that the Iraqi and American foreign ministers would meet on Wednesday in Geneva, but said that the talks would succeed only if Iraq was prepared to discuss withdrawal from Kuwait.

"The question is whether Tareq Aziz is going to the meeting with any readiness to discuss matters like this. If he goes there to discuss this withdrawal, then the meeting will be good," he said.

Despite his conciliatory words, the king emphasised that if Iraq did not pull out of Kuwait, he was prepared for war.

Baker

(Continued from page 1)

in its resolve to dislodge Iraqi troops. Asked whether war was looming, Scowcroft said: "I hope not, but that's up to Saddam Hussein."

The Iraqi ambassador said that the U.N. Security Council resolution was unfair if similar force is not applied to other disputes.

"We have to solve all the problems in the area," he said. "The Security Council has to be true to itself" in implementing resolutions.

Masbat added that the United Nations must be "serious in im-

U.S. Muslims confront divided loyalties

By David Briggs
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Iraq's call for an international Islamic conference as American forces prepare for the possibility of war has forced U.S. Muslims to confront their own divided loyalties.

Although many oppose the presence of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia, the home to Islam's two holiest shrines, their opposition to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait has left few Muslim leaders here amenable to attending the conference next week in Baghdad.

"I know Saddam personally," said Mohammad T. Mehdi, secretary-general of the National Council on Islamic Affairs. If I go there, I'll either have to shut up or support the invasion.

But at least one U.S. Muslim leader has accepted the invitation.

Nihad Hamid, secretary-general of the Federation of Islamic Associations in the U.S. and Canada, said he is going to Baghdad for the same reason some Christian leaders have visited: To promote peace.

For the sake of our American boys in the Gulf, our duty is to take some chance, he said. "Our duty as a Muslim and as an

American is to attend the conference to prevent war."

The three-day Islamic conference is scheduled to begin Wednesday, six days before the United Nations deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait or face the use of force. Iraqi Religious Affairs Minister Abdnillab Fadhl said the conference would draw up a strategy for Islamic action to respond to military action against his country.

Western diplomats have said the conference represents another effort by Iraq to elicit Islamic support for its secular regime. In his new year's message, Saddam struck hard at Muslim concerns about the presence of foreign troops in Saudi Arabia.

He said King Fahd of Saudi Arabia deserved the title of traitor of the two holy mosques.

Saddam's strategy strikes at sympathetic chords.

David Kerr, a professor of Islamic studies and director of the Macdonald Centre for the study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary, said even liberal Muslims are impatient to the point of non-acceptance to the presence of foreign troops in Islam's holy land.

I think it's fair to say that

while most Muslim organisations that I'm in touch with condemn the illegality of the invasion, they are anything on a scale from very unhappy to just completely opposed to an American presence in Saudi Arabia, Kerr said.

Hamid, who plans to attend the Iraqi conference, said the occupation of Kuwait is an inter-Arab problem.

Our nation should not be involved in it, especially in a place like Saudi Arabia, where the holy shrines are located, Hamid said.

But it has not swung many U.S. Muslims toward Iraq's side, according to some Muslim leaders and scholars.

"Our position, and the general position of the rest of the American Muslims, is that while we are against the American military buildup as a threat to world peace, we are 100 per cent against the invasion of Kuwait," Mehdi said.

Zaheer Udden, president of the New York chapter of the Islamic Circle of North America, said that while 99 per cent of Muslims oppose the intervention of U.S. force, "the big majority don't like the invasion of Kuwait by force, no, 1."

The U.S. force in the region now stands at 335,000 and is expected to reach about 430,000 by month's end. The Pentagon said 245,000 troops from allied nations are in the area.

Dawud Assad, secretary-general of the Council of Masjid in the U.S.; said some Islamic scholars have defended the presence of U.S. troops on the grounds that the Koran allows help from non-Muslims to protect against aggressors.

"Our stand is everybody condemns the attack by Iraq," he said.

And Iraq's attempts to exploit the situation are damaged by its own "lack of credibility" among religious Muslims, said Kerr.

Kerr cited Saddam's leadership of Iraq's secular Arab Baath Socialist party, his past repression of Islamic fundamentalists in Iraq and his warnings of the spread of Islamic fundamentalism in eliciting help during the Iran-Iraq war.

But all that may not matter to many people in Arab countries who will not be inclined to look beyond the rhetoric against the United States, Mehdi said.

"They will support anybody as long as he stands against Western colonialism," he said.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Daniel Bernard.

"The invitation remains valid and things could change in the coming days," he said.

Bernard made no comment on Iraq's suggestion that the EC delegation could come to Baghdad. Nor did he elaborate on his comment that the coming days could see a changed situation.

Hamas

(Continued from page 1)

The deaths of over 20 Palestinians in police gunfire on Oct. 8 in Jerusalem and the Gulf crisis have added to Hamas' support among Palestinians.

Last month, Hamas slogans on the wall of a factory where three Israelis were stabbed to death took responsibility for the slayings. Israel responded by arresting hundreds of Hamas activists and ordering four of them deported.

But Yassin said the arrests would not stop the Palestinian people from achieving their purpose.

"For every act there is a reaction. This will not weaken the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people are fighting for their rights and they will get them."

Ibrahim

(Continued from page 1)

with the West and the regional Arab countries, has insisted Iran will remain neutral in a possible conflict in the Gulf.

But Rafsanjani's hardline, anti-Western rivals have been pressing him to join Iraq in a confrontation with the United States.

The Times said Ibrahim will be the highest-ranking Iraqi official to visit Iran since both countries agreed to peace, formally ending the 1980-88 war.

Ibrahim is among a handful of top Iraqi officials close to Saddam.

Europe

(Continued from page 1)

the Iraqi refusal but did not rule out movement in the coming days.

"It is too bad that the occasion

Mogadishu

(Continued from page 1)

Omani capital Muscat said the evacuees were expected to arrive in Oman in about two days.

Earlier Saturday, the Soviet Foreign Ministry in Moscow announced the entire staff of the Soviet embassy in Somalia had taken refuge in the U.S. embassy and hoped to be evacuated by the U.S. military.

Meanwhile, a Kenyan official and Somalia's ambassador to Egypt denied unconfirmed reports that Siad Barre had fled to Kenya.

"The legitimate government is still in charge (in Somalia) and the president is practicing his leadership role," Ambassador Abdullahi Hassan Mahmoud told reporters in Cairo.

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Liverpool escapes humiliation

LONDON (R)—English soccer giants Liverpool escaped a humiliating defeat by second division Blackburn Rovers by just seconds in the F.A. Cup third round Saturday.

The two sides drew 1-1 after Blackburn, who had been successfully defending a one-goal lead for most of the second half, hit an own goal just before the final whistle.

The capacity 19,000-strong crowd at Blackburn's Windy Ewood Park ground were already on their feet celebrating when fullback Mark Atkins scored the own goal in injury time.

Liverpool, the favourites and first division leaders, will take on Blackburn at Anfield in the replay Tuesday.

Tottenham and Arsenal both went through to the fourth round but the biggest surprise of the day was non-league side Woking, who upset second division West Bromwich Albion, 4-2.

Woking, the only non-league side to go through to the last 32, were helped by a bat-trick from Tim Buzaglio, who plays cricket for Gibraltair.

Arsenal, still without captain Tony Adams who is serving a jail sentence for drunken driving, beat Sunderland 3-1 with first-half strikes by Alan Smith, scoring his 13th goal in 11 games, and Swede Anders Limpar.

Tottenham's 1-0 victory at fourth division Blackpool came with a 69th-minute goal by Paul Stewart from a curling free kick

by England World Cup hero Paul Gascoigne.

Blackburn's heartbreak came amid swirling winds and bad tempers.

Both sides were reduced to 10 men in the second half. Blackburn's Irish international Kevin Moran, the only man ever to get a red card in the F.A. Cup final in his days with Manchester United, got his marching orders for a professional foul on Ian Rush. Liverpool's Swedish captain Glenn Hysen followed eight minutes later for a similar offence on goal-scoring Simon Garner. Garner, making only his seventh appearance of the season after a groin injury, had put his side 1-0 up in the 46th minute with a half volley.

Blackburn manager Don MacKay has proud of his side despite the draw and sympathised with Atkins, who saw the ball go into the net off his leg. "The wind won a little bit today," MacKay said. "It made it very deceptive."

Blackburn, who won the cup 100 years ago, are languishing near the bottom of the second division with just one win from their last 10 league games.

"It breaks my heart why they can't play like this in the league," said MacKay.

Midfielder John Ebbrell rescued Everton from defeat by Charlton with two goals that turned their match around.

Charlton took a 31st-minute lead with a header by Alex Dyer, signed from Crystal

Palace for £190,000 in October.

But Ebbrell levelled the score nine minutes later when he picked up a free kick from transfer-listed Kevin Sheedy that was allowed to bounce across the Charlton penalty area.

He then scored the winner for Everton in the 60th minute when he clipped the ball over goalkeeper Bob Bolder from the edge of the area.

First division Chelsea and Derby went out of the cup, both beaten by second division opposition.

The London side lost 3-1 at home to Oxford United while Derby, despite a clutch of splendid first-half saves from former England goalkeeper Peter Shilton who was back after injury, were beaten 2-0 at Newcastle.

The draw for the fourth of the cup, to be played on Jan. 26 and 27, was being made Sunday even though defending champions Manchester United do not play their third-round match against Queen's Park Rangers until Monday.

In Scotland, Glasgow Rangers continued their relentless charge towards the premier division title with a 1-0 win against a Hearts side reduced to 10 players.

Scottish World Cup defender Craig Levein was sent off in the 63rd minute for a challenge on Mark Hateley, who went on to score the winning goal from close range three minutes before the final whistle.

Referee Jim Renton was given

a police escort off the pitch at the end of the match after angry protests against the sending-off by Hearts' manager Joe Jordan and goalkeeper Henry Smith.

Woking started Saturday as a little-known, non-league side given only a 5,000-1 chance of winning the F.A. Cup.

Thanks to Buzaglio, a 29-year-old computer operator who plays soccer in his spare time, they ended the day as national heroes.

The English love nothing better than an underdog and so Woking, the only non-league side to go through to the last 32 of the cup, will be assured of country-wide support then they play the next round later this month.

Woking manager Geoff Chapple, himself a financial consultant from an insurance firm, was thrown into the dressing-room bath by his delighted players—including a fireman, a bank clerk, a salesman and an engineer—after the shock win at West Bromwich.

"This is the greatest day I have ever had in soccer," he said. "They were all magnificent."

Fifty-one coachloads of woking fans trekked north to see the lanky Buzaglio score three goals in 14 minutes of the second half of the club's first third-round cup appearance in history.

"It wasn't down to me—it was a wonderful team effort," the striker said. "I dreamed of just getting one goal so to score a hat-trick was unbelievable."

American Scott Davis.

Jakob Hlasek, seeded fourth, faces fellow Swiss Niclas Kulti.

The other men's seeds are Americans Jay Berger (5) and Aaron Krickstein (6), Soviet Andrei Cherkasov (7) and Marc Rosset of Switzerland (8).

American Mary Joe Fernandez, ranked no. 4 in the world, is the top seed in the women's singles.

The top eight seeds in the women's singles all have first round byes.

Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain is the no. 2 seed ahead of Manuela Maleeva-Frangiier of Switzerland (3), and American Zina Garrison (4).

The other seeded players are Natalia Zvereva of the Soviet

Union (5), Jana Novotna of Czechoslovakia (6), Barbara Paulus of Austria (7) and Amy Frazier of the United States (8).

The tournament offers prize money totaling \$125,000.

Last week Seles said that winning the Hopman Cup team tournament with compatriot Goran Prpic had left her drained.

New South Wales Open organisers said Seles would decide whether to play in the Australian Open, the first Grand Slam tournament of 1991, Thursday.

The Women's Tennis Association (WTA) tried unsuccessfully to lure one of the other 1990 Grand Slam titleholders—Stefi Graf, Martina Navratilova or Gabriela Sabatini—to replace Seles in the draw.

Kulti takes first senior tennis title in Australia

ADELAIDE, Australia (R)—Sweden's Niclas Kulti graduated to the big time Sunday, winning his first senior title by beating Germany's Michael Stich 6-3 1-6 6-2 in the final of the Australian Men's Hardcourt Tournament.

The 19-year-old, the world's top junior in 1989, took the first set in just 26 minutes against the sixth seed, who was playing his third match in two days.

But Stich, who appeared to be carrying an ankle injury, fought back courageously to take the second set in 29 minutes.

Unseeded Kulti was leading 1-0 the deciding set when rain forced a 30-minute delay. The break disturbed Stich's rhythm and Kulti's accurate first serve and fierce return of serve earned him a deserved victory.

Kulti, who lost his first final in Prague last August, said: "It

feels great. I don't know the right words. I don't know if I'm happy or not."

Kulti said during the rain interruption he took heed of coach Martin Bohm's advice. "I changed my game a little bit. After the break I played more top spin and higher balls."

A brilliant backhand top spin lob secured a break in the sixth game of the final set and from that point Kulti never looked back.

Stich, ranked 42 in the world, said he lost concentration during the enforced interval.

"The problem for me was to stay mentally tough, but that was difficult because yesterday I had to play two tough matches (against Jimmy Arias and second seed Jim Courier)," said Stich who served 12 aces in the match but made too many unforced errors.

Sukova wins Danone Open

BRISBANE, Australia (AP)—Second-seeded Helena Sukova of Czechoslovakia overpowered Japan's Kijimuta 6-4, 6-3 Sunday to win the \$150,000 Danone Open Women's Tennis Championship.

Sukova needed only 74 minutes to beat the unseeded Kijimuta and win the event at the Milton Tennis Centre for the third time. Her other victories came in 1984 and 1989.

Sukova used her greater strength to hit a succession of forehand winners and force Kijimuta into errors. She also served strongly, hitting five aces.

Sukova, 25, earned \$27,000 for the eighth singles victory of her career and her first in over a year. She went through the tournament without dropping a set.

"I'm so happy to be holding this trophy. It is a great feeling and it makes all the hard work worthwhile," Sukova said.

Kijimuta earned \$12,000 as runnerup.

"It has been a great week for me and a good way to start the year," said Kijimuta, whose ranking will drop from 115th to the mid-50s, according to Women's Tennis Association officials.

"Helena was too strong for me today, but I've learned I can play consistently and rise up the rank-

ings."

Kijimuta, 22, beat three seeds during the tournament and had been bidding to win the first professional tournament of her career. It was only her second final in seven years on the tour.

Sukova had to hold off two surges by Kijimuta, who rallied from 1-5 both sets before succumbing.

The tall Czechoslovak player reversed a straight sets loss to Kijimuta in the 1989 French Open.

Sukova beat unseeded American Linda Harvey-Wild 6-1, 6-1 earlier Sunday in a semi-final that had been delayed by rain.

Sukova took barely an hour to win the match, dominating the 19-year-old American, who was playing the first Kraft General Foods Tour semi-final of her career.

Kijimuta rallied from 1-2 down in the deciding set to beat Larisa Savchenko of the Soviet Union 6-2, 5-7, 6-2 in the other semi-final Sunday.

Kijimuta had led 6-2, 4-4 when rain halted play Saturday.

The tournament, played on synthetic rebound ace courts, was one of a series of warm-up events for the Australian Open, which begins on Jan. 14 at the National Tennis Centre in Melbourne.

Belgian retakes lead in Paris-Dakar Rally

PARIS (R)—Jacky Ickx, of Belgium, recaptured the lead from Citroen team mate Ari Vatanen of Finland Saturday in the fourth stage of the Paris-Dakar rally between Ghat and Tumu, in Libya.

Ickx finished in second place some 16 minutes behind Frenchman Hubert Auriol's Lada in the 681-km stage as other competitors struggled to find their way

through the rocky southern Libyan desert.

Three-time winner Vatanen, who crossed the line half an hour behind Auriol, is now trailing Ickx by six minutes and 25 seconds in the provisional overall standings. Ickx lost the lead to Vatanen Friday.

Frenchman Pierre Lartigue, in a Mitsubishi, is third a further 32 seconds behind.

Lendl heads New South Wales Tennis open entries

SYDNEY, Australia (AP)—Ivan Lendl heads a depleted men's singles field for the New South Wales Open Tennis Championships, which begin Monday at the White City Complex.

The top-seeded Lendl faces Australian Davis Cup player Wally Masur in his first round match in the 32-player singles competition.

The tournament has been hit by the late withdrawals of American John McEnroe and Swede Mats Wilander from the men's draw and Monica Seles of Yugoslavia, the world's no. 2-ranked woman, from the 56-player women's singles competition.

Seles withdrew on Sunday from

the event, saying she was tired.

She deferred making a decision on whether to play in the Australian Open until the middle of this week.

The New South Wales Open is the final official warmup for the Australian Open, the year's opening Grand Slam event, which begins Jan. 14 at the National Tennis Centre in Melbourne.

Lendl Saturday won a six-man exhibition event at Salamander Bay, north of Sydney, beating German Carl-Uwe Steeb in the final.

Jonas Svensson of Sweden, the no. 2 seed, plays compatriot Magnus Gustafsson in his first round match, while third-seeded Frenchman Guy Forget plays

American Scott Davis.

Jakob Hlasek, seeded fourth, faces fellow Swiss Niclas Kulti.

The other men's seeds are Americans Jay Berger (5) and Aaron Krickstein (6), Soviet Andrei Cherkasov (7) and Marc Rosset of Switzerland (8).

American Mary Joe Fernandez, ranked no. 4 in the world, is the top seed in the women's singles.

The top eight seeds in the women's singles all have first round byes.

Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain is the no. 2 seed ahead of Manuela Maleeva-Frangiier of Switzerland (3), and American Zina Garrison (4).

The other seeded players are Natalia Zvereva of the Soviet

Swiss becomes Skiing World Cup overall leader

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany (AP)—Guenter Mader of Austria won the second men's Super-G of the season Sunday and Franz Heinzer of Switzerland became the new skiing World Cup overall leader by placing second.

Heinzer picked up 20 points for second and vaulted over Alberto Tomba of Italy, Tomba, who dislikes the speedy downhill and Super-G races, skipped the Garmisch-partenkirchen events.

Heinzer, who also picked up eight points by finishing eighth in Saturday's Downhill, now has 104 points to 97 for Tomba.

Marc Girardelli of Luxembourg, who finished third Sunday and picked up 15 points, moved into third overall with 93.

Mader posted a time of one minute, 23.95 seconds to clinch the sixth World Cup victory of his career.

Heinzer, who also placed second in the first Super-G of

the season in Valloire, France, had a time of 1:21.21.

"I am a little surprised to be leading in the World Cup, but right now I am not thinking of the overall title. There are too many slaloms and giant slaloms left," said Heinzer, who also leads the downhill and Super-G standings.

Heinzer was fourth out of the gate, after the three earlier races all missed gates. They were Olympic champion and winner of the season's first Super-G Franck Piccard of France, and two Swedes, Niklas Henning and Lars Boerje Eriksson.

"I was aware of what happened to them and I think I was a bit more cautious. I slowed down at the gates," Heinzer said. "It's better to be second than not to finish."

Mader, starting immediately after Heinzer, blazed through the course that had several sharp curves and sudden jumps.

"It was a tough course but I liked it. I hit the last turn in an almost perfect way which allowed me to keep all my speed for the last section," he said.

"It's a fast and challenging race with all kinds of turns and nice jumps."

The 26-year-old Austrian all-rounder has wins in all events except the downhill.

This was the second Super-G win of his career, following the one in Les Menuires last year.

"I had some problems in the earlier races but I am now improving my form," Mader said.

"I'm racing in all four events and it's very demanding."

Girardelli's time was 1:21.29. "I am skiing better now, I'm faster than I was in December," said Girardelli, another all-rounder who is considered one of the favourites for the overall title.

Girardelli has no victories this season, but said he was pleased with his progress.

Mutt'n'Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY JANUARY 7, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: This is a good time to see that everything around you is in good working order and to let those around you know that you are a perfectionist who wants to improve all your various outlets.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Unusual friends want to do something for you that should please you very much—either in finishing a project or starting a new undertaking.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You have some civic project that can wisely claim your attention every spare moment today so be sure that you get out and do it early.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You have a big chance to show your various new allies that you are endowed with a brilliant and open mind and come up with the right answer.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You can certainly get rid of those unfinished payments now and show others you are the one who is devoted to your admiring me.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You find you can sit down and discuss with a partner where you are headed and what needs to be done of an amazing nature to enlarge a new project.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You have a pretty good idea

how much work you have to do so don't fool yourself by pretending it's less but add new ways of doing and lose not time.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is the time when you can have one of your most pleasant and happiest times and every spare moment should be used getting more active time.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Your next of kin expects you to do something that may take some of your valuable time but its well worth it since you stand to benefit.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Look for the silver lining in some deal or interest you have with a usual associate which has been delayed but in which you have faith.

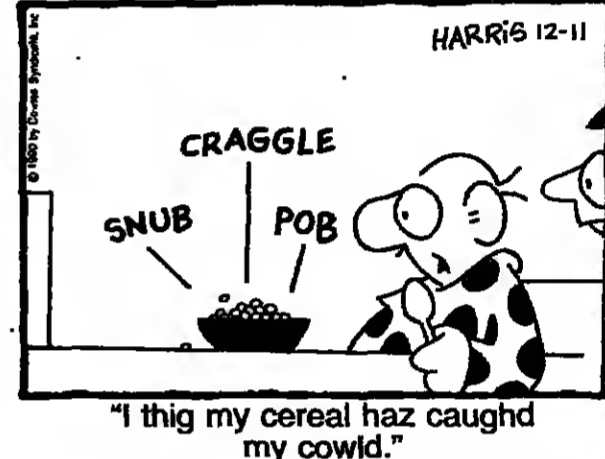
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) There are some pretty interesting methods by which you can gain the good will of a businessman who has the know-how to help you with a project.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is your day to take a good long look at yourself and make the decisions just what you need to do to improve your appearance and health.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You certainly have many unique conditions to do something about so get off alone, delve into them and come up with the answers that you need.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



JUMBLE

THAT'S A SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ENPAC

ILLEB

SELUNS

TROBEH

He earned it every step of the way

WHOEVER SAID THAT MONEY GROWS ON TREES DIDN'T KNOW THAT YOU'VE ALSO GOT TO

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: OOOO THE OOOO FOR

Yesterday's Jumbles: MAKER COUGH TRIBAL HARROW

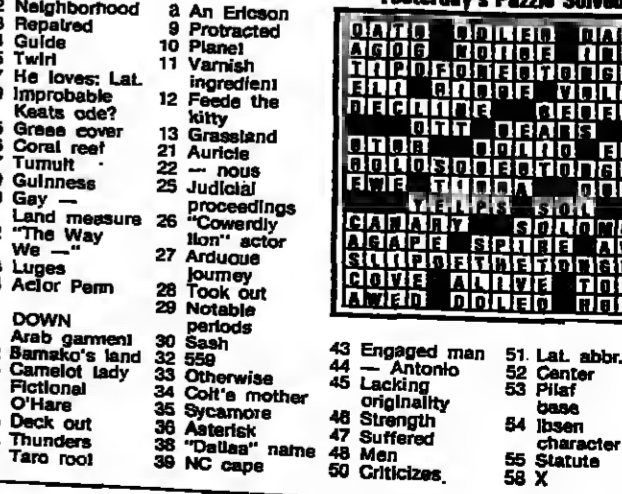
Answer: As she did this, words passed between them—THREW THE BOOK AT HIM

THE Daily Crossword

by Dorothy B. Marsh



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



Malaysian bank quits Bahrain

BAHRAIN (R) — Bank Bumiputra Malaysia Berhad said Saturday it had closed its offshore banking unit (OBU) in Bahrain on Dec. 31.

"The decision was taken in line with the bank's policy to rationalise overseas operations. It does not reflect on the present 'Gulf crisis,' the bank said in a statement.

A spokesman for the bank said it would not leave a representative office on the island. He gave no further details.

The move brings the number of OBUs in Bahrain, the Middle East's main financial centre, to around 50 from a peak of 75 in the mid-1970s.

Senior executives in Gulf International Bank (GIB), the island's second-biggest OBU, said Thursday GIB was terminating the contracts of all international staff in Bahrain as part of a review speeded up by the Gulf crisis.

Many OBUs in Bahrain have been badly hit by the loss of deposits and international confidence following Iraq's takeover of Kuwait.

Sudan starts pumping oil

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan said Sunday that oil was flowing at a well in the western Kordofan region in a field abandoned by the U.S. Chevron Corporation because of civil war in the south.

Radio Omdurman said Sudan's military leader Omar Hassan Al-Bashir visited the Abo Jebra Well (three) some 780 kilometres southwest of the capital Khartoum, Saturday.

It said the drilling and production works were undertaken by Sudanese engineers and technicians.

The oil would be used to generate electricity and operate factories, the radio said without giving further details.

It quoted Bashir as saying that the oil was a source of pride and not on foreign experts exploiting its resources.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Sunday, January 6, 1991
Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell
U.S. dollar	663.0	667.0
Pound Sterling	1284.0	1291.7
Deutschemark	440.9	443.5
Swiss franc	520.8	523.9
French franc	129.8	130.6
Japanese yen (for 100)	492.2	495.2
Dutch guilder	390.9	393.2
Swedish crown	117.6	118.3
Italian lire (for 100)	58.6	59.0
Belgian franc (for 10)	214.0	215.3

Italy registers 6.1% inflation for last year

ROME (R) — Italian consumer prices rose an average 6.1 per cent in 1990, higher than government forecasts but lower than had been feared at the start of the Gulf crisis.

Unless war breaks out in the Gulf, economic analysts expect a gradual easing of inflation this year as oil prices ease and growth in Europe slows.

Prices rose 6.4 per cent year-on-year in December, down slightly from 6.5 in November, for an average annual increase in 1990 of 6.1 per cent, the National Statistics Institute has announced.

The government last year had forecast a 5.5 per cent average 1990 rise, updated in September to six per cent. Analysts' forecasts for 1991 are between 5.5 and 6.5 per cent.

Inflation in Italy had been drifting down during the spring but started to climb after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait sent oil prices soaring.

Italy imports 60 per cent of its energy needs and buys nearly all its oil abroad.

Oil prices soon subsided and were offset slightly by the weaker dollar, in which crude is priced, but not before some analysts had wondered whether Italy could escape seven per cent inflation in 1990.

"I think people are relatively surprised to see a 1990 figure in this range instead of the seven or seven and a half per cent being

talked about when the Gulf crisis began," said Vanessa Rossi, chief European economist with Swiss Bank Corp in London. She expected prices to be down to around 5.5 per cent by the end of the year if oil stays calm.

Analysts noted that Italy, with its chronic budget deficits and persistent failure to curb pay awards, has a built-in tendency to inflation that has left it well above the average of around four per cent enjoyed by the rest of its European Community partners, Britain excluded.

The tendency towards over-spending may actually increase in 1991 if, as expected, Italy's five-party ruling coalition falls apart and a general election is called in the spring, some analysts believe.

A question mark remains over the lira, which had been skirting record lows against the mark last month and threatening to make imports more expensive, although it has rebounded against the German currency in the last week.

But in general analysts believe the key factor affecting Italian inflation this year will be the expected slowdown in the economy in line with those of its Western European neighbours.

The big impediment remains the Gulf. A full-scale war could drive oil prices up as high as \$70 a barrel for a while from around \$28 now, many experts believe.

Investcorp beefs up net profit and assets

BAHRAIN (R) — Bahrain's Investcorp Bank said that despite the Gulf crisis it had a record net profit in 1990 of \$66.3 million, up 28 per cent over the previous year.

Owned by shareholders in six Gulf Arab states, the bank made a net profit of \$51.8 million in 1989.

A bank statement published in newspapers Sunday said its assets rose to \$943.9 million at the end of 1990 from \$813.9 million a year ago. Operating income rose to \$99.25 million in 1990 against \$77.17 million in 1989.

The bank, established eight years ago, recommended a \$15 million cash dividend to shareholders, unchanged from 1989.

Inflation in Uruguay hits 129%

MONTEVIDEO (AP) — The cost of living increased by 5.1 per cent in December, bringing the 1990 total to 129 per cent, the highest level in 23 years, the government has reported.

The total significantly exceeded the 1989 level of 89 per cent, and fell just short of the record high 136 per cent tallied in 1968.

The nine-month-old government of President Luis Lacalle has targeted inflation as a top priority. By fiscal economies, the monthly rate was throttled to December from a rate of 11.7 per cent three months earlier.

Yeltsin sharpens row with Moscow

MOSCOW (R) — Russian Federation leader Boris Yeltsin signalled this weekend he would press his challenge to President Mikhail Gorbachev over the Soviet budget, deepening gloom on the outlook for the country's crisis-ridden economy.

At the same time, Soviet commentators expressed strong concern over the slow pace at which Gorbachev and his team were moving towards economic reform and creating the market system the Kremlin chief has long said he wants.

Yeltsin, Gorbachev's main political rival and president of the parliament of the giant federation, told Soviet journalists Saturday that Russia would refuse to meet Kremlin demands on payments into the central union budget.

"I think their request is indecent," the widely-popular Yeltsin said.

He declared that Russia had no intention of paying more than 78 billion rubles of a total of 105 billion demanded by Soviet Finance Minister Valentine Pavlov.

The Soviet state bank sets two exchange rates for the rouble — an official one of 0.56 rubles to the U.S. dollar now largely used for statistical calculations, and a commercial one of 1.68 to the dollar used for most transactions.

Yeltsin's stand clearly dispelled optimism that confrontation between several Soviet republics and the central government over the union budget and plan for 1991 had been defused at a Kremlin meeting Thursday.

It also left little doubt that another major political battle lay ahead between Yeltsin and Gorbachev who appeared to have sunk their differences late last year and agreed to work for radical economic change.

Pessimism over the prospects for an economic breakthrough in the near future was reinforced by comments in the authoritative newspaper Izvestia and the business weekly Kommersant.

Izvestia, citing official figures already published predicting an overall decline of 1.5 per cent in industrial output for 1991, suggested government calculations that the budget deficit could be held down were dubious.

Measures to create a market system included in a Gorbachev programme approved by the Soviet parliament last year were being implemented "not only with extreme slowness but also with amazing timidity", economic analyst Yuri Rytov said.

Kommersant said that although the Gorbachev team continued to pay lip service to a market economy, "every step it takes in that direction is so fraught with loopholes and contradictions that it amounts to standing still."

On Saturday, the Kremlin chief issued a decree aimed at putting up to five million hectares (12 million acres) of land inefficiently used by state and collective farms into the hands of individual and cooperative farmers.

But, unlike a law recently passed by the Russian Parliament, the decree made no allowance for private ownership. It also effectively left to local officials, who are often opposed to reform, the decisions on what land is to be handed over.

Gorbachev told Soviet television after the Thursday meeting, the first of his new Federation Council grouping top officials from all 15 republics, that an economic agreement for the new year had been reached.

The Supreme Soviet, the union legislature, opens its first session of 1991 Tuesday with the budget and plan for the year, in the past always finalised well in advance, as the top item on its agenda.

But Yeltsin said the central government — a large portion of whose funds goes towards maintaining the restless armed forces — "will not take more from us than is appropriate."

Major admits British economy is in recession

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major acknowledged in an interview broadcast Sunday that Britain was in the grip of a recession that could last for several months.

But Major, in his first full television interview since becoming prime minister nearly six weeks ago, said he did not think it would be as deep as the trough in the early 1980s and gave a generally upbeat assessment of future economic prospects.

"It is technically a recession because output has fallen (since last July)," the prime minister told TV-AM's Frost On Sunday programme.

Major's comments were his clearest acknowledgement to date that the country was in a downturn.

He said he believed the recession would last "for a few months yet to come," but added: "I don't believe it will be as serious as the one in the early 1980s."

U.S. President George Bush said Friday that the United States could be in a "shallow" recession.

In the interview, taped two days ago, Major said he saw clear signs inflation was coming down and insisted that interest rates would follow.

"We are convinced that inflation is going to come down. The signs are unmistakable," he said. "Interest rates will be likely to follow the inflation rate down."

Major and his Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont say they are determined not to cut interest rates, now topping

14 per cent, or devalue the pound to ease the downturn before inflation — currently at 9.7 per cent — is beaten.

Chancellor himself until he took over after Margaret Thatcher's resignation, Major drove home that message Sunday.

Asked whether he would consider a devaluation if the pound came under pressure or in any other circumstances, he replied: "no." He said Britain remained committed to keeping sterling within the hands set when it joined the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) of the European Monetary System (EMS) last October.

"You enter into a commitment when you go into the Exchange Rate Mechanism to keep sterling within the hands and that is what we will do. I don't think anybody should be in any doubt about that. We are determined to beat inflation out," he stressed.

Major also reiterated his opposition to a single European currency.

"It is simply not a wise policy until you have economies at some stage in the future that are much more closely aligned than anything we can perceive at the moment in Europe," he noted.

He said he expected further increases in unemployment in the next few months but refused to cite a figure. Unemployment figures jumped by 57,600 last November to more than 1.76 million — the biggest monthly increase in more than eight years.

U.S. carmakers post lower sales

DETROIT (R) — Sales of U.S. built cars revived with an 8.3 per cent gain in late December, according to figures released Saturday, but the good news was not enough to rescue the industry from one of its most dismal years.

Car sales for the year fell 3.1 per cent on a daily-rate basis, with industry analysts blaming the economic slowdown for worsening the car industry's problems.

"Problems in the economy deepened a recession already going on in car sales," said David Healy of Barclays de Zoete Wedd.

Truck sales continued their slide, falling 16.2 per cent to 112,755 for the full year, domestic truck sales were at 4,139,922 units, down 5.4 per cent on a daily-rate basis.

The big three U.S. carmakers each showed late December gains, with Chrysler Corp up 17.4 per cent, General Motors (G.M.) Corp. gaining 8.4 per cent and Ford Motor Co. up 0.7 per cent.

But for the year, the U.S. producers saw their sales drop at the expense of the Japanese.

For all of 1990, Chrysler sales dipped 13.6 per cent, Ford was down 10.7 per cent and G.M. had a 4.5 per cent loss.

Robert Rowley, vice president of North American sales for Ford, called the full-year figures "disappointing, with a weak economy and concerns about international uncertainties pulling auto sales down."

At the same time, Honda saw a full-year gain of 18.8 per cent, while Toyota sales surged 63.6 per cent. The sales figures do not include cars imported by the Japanese manufacturers.

Some gains in the luxury car sector, prompted by an effort by consumers to beat a new Jan. 1 luxury tax, failed to significantly boost overall car sales.

Industry experts say that if the current economic slowdown worsens, carmakers could slide into a morass not seen since the early 1980s.

OPEC more than makes up for loss of Iraqi, Kuwaiti oil

NEW YORK (R) — The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) boosted its December output to a nine-month high, more than making up for the loss of Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil, a Reuters survey has showed.

Estimates derived from official, industry and shipping sources in Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas

show that OPEC increased its output to 23.55 million barrels per day, up by 480,000 from November.

The increase closed the four million barrel per day gap left by embargoes on crude from Iraq and Kuwait.

Saudi Arabia made up almost half the increase, with big gains also in Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Indonesia.

At their twice-yearly meeting last month, OPEC's 13 members voted to extend an agreement reached in August to suspend output until the Gulf crisis is resolved.

Sources said some members, despite growing stocks of unsold oil worldwide, continue to push production to its limits to ensure adequate supplies in the event of war and to defuse the impact higher prices can have on demand.

But they said world production capacity remains tight, despite rapid efforts by OPEC members to step in.

"There is no fat to tolerate mishaps in the major oil producing areas or demand shocks," said Michael Rothman, a vice president at Merrill Lynch.

"Physically there is no shortage of oil. But the reality is that even though you have a balance between supply and demand, it is a delicate one," he added.

Sources estimated that Saudi Arabia's share of output was 8.28 million barrels per day in December, excluding output from an area shared with Kuwait. It represents increases of about 230,000 barrels per day from November and nearly three million barrels per day from pre-invasion levels.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

As originally planned, the American Community School will resume all classes (K-12) after Christmas break on January 9, 1991

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Polish premier sets lofty goals but Walesa holds the reins

WARSAW (R) — Jan Krzysztof Bielecki has launched his career as Poland's prime minister by promising dynamic economic reform, but real power lies firmly with President Lech Walesa as the country heads for quick elections.

Bielecki, the radical young economist picked by Walesa to succeed Tadeusz Mazowiecki, injected new blood into the cabinet and told parliament Saturday he would step up the drive towards a Western-style free market.

"We want to clear the field for human energy and enterprise," he said in his first major policy speech.

"The changes so far have not brought full results. Many essential matters are still to be resolved... the task of the new government is to awaken individual ambitions and national aspirations, giving new dynamics to the reforms," he said.

But the 39-year-old Solidarity deputy, little known in Poland until his nomination by Walesa, has only a short time to produce

results.

Free elections to parliament, still two-thirds dominated by former Communists and their allies, are expected within a few months, restricting Bielecki to a transitional role.

Some commentators and politicians also question how much power Walesa, elected president on Dec. 9, will allow his prime minister to wield.

NEWS ANALYSIS

"Nothing indicates that Bielecki is a strong enough personality to be an equal partner of parliament in talks over its policies," Solidarity parliamentarian Ryszard Bugaj told Reuters last week.

"We also need clarification of who is in fact taking decisions and where they are being taken. There is a danger that decisions will be taken on the other side of the road," he added.

The Belvedere Presidential Palace now occupied by Walesa stands across the street from the

prime minister's office in the council of ministers building. Criticism of Walesa has mounted in recent days over his moves to form a presidential council of influential advisers which, opponents say, could bypass the government and parliament.

Walesa has denied trying to form a "super-government" but his spokesman Andrzej Drzycki said last week: "One can clearly say that all big politics are moving to the Belvedere."

Another poser for Bielecki is whether Poles will stomach more of the tough free-market policies which they appeared to reject in the presidential election by giving Mazowiecki just 18 per cent of the first-round vote.

While taming inflation and building the foundation of a free-market economy, the austerity policies of Mazowiecki's Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz plunged state-owned industry into deep recession, cut real incomes by a third and caused unemployment to shoot from zero to eight per cent.

Despite this, Bielecki retained Balcerowicz as finance minister and even boosted his status by naming him his only deputy — a clear signal that policy will stay largely unchanged.

Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski and three other Mazowiecki ministers also kept their places, but Bielecki gave some key portfolios to radicals like himself.

The grey-bearded prime minister stressed that he would speed up privatisation of smaller companies, liquidate decaying state-owned factories and press ahead with banking reform and the creation of a stock exchange and capital market.

But he acknowledged the need for quick, visible results and not just further hardship. "We understand that unpopular decisions should bring the results expected by society," he said.

"The effectiveness of our activities... will be confirmed in the everyday life of Polish families. Not words but deeds will count, and results that you can see."

Premier: Pakistan will not bow for aid

ISLAMABAD (R) — Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said Sunday Pakistan would not seek economic aid by bowing before any power — apparently meaning the United States — or abandon its controversial nuclear energy programme.

"We will not bend our principles, no matter someone gives us aid or not," he said in a speech in the Punjab province town of Toba Tek Singh.

The remarks seemed to be directed against the suspension of all economic and military aid to Islamabad by the United States since last October over a nuclear row.

"Pakistan will continue its peaceful atomic energy programme and not compromise on it at any cost," the Pakistan News Agency (APP) quoted Sharif as telling a campaign rally for parliamentary elections to be held Thursday.

He said his two-month-old government would "not bow before any power for economic aid."

This was the latest in a series of strong statements by Pakistani leaders in recent weeks about the aid cutoff.

The two sides opened formal talks to resolve the issue last month and more meetings are likely later.

But a Pakistan government source said last week there was only a 10 per cent chance for the restoration of the \$564 million U.S. aid.

The aid was halted under the so-called Pressler Amendment legislation after President George Bush refused to certify to the U.S. Congress that Pakistan does not have nuclear weapons.

Islamabad denies having or making nuclear weapons and regards the 1985 Pressler Amendment as grossly unfair because it applies only to Pakistan and not to its traditional foe India, which exploded a nuclear device in 1974.

3 Pakistanis killed in border clashes with India

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Three people, including a 10-year-old boy, were killed when Indian border guards opened fire along the troubled Kashmir frontier, according to news reports Sunday.

At least 15 people were injured in the three-hour incident late Saturday, Pakistan's Urdu-language newspapers claimed. The reports did not say what caused the guards to shoot.

"We haven't heard anything, but we aren't told of civilian casualties," said a Pakistani army spokesman, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The disputed Kashmir, in the shadow of the Himalaya mountain range, has been the flash-point of wars between Pakistan and India in 1948 and 1965.

The nations fought in 1971 over Bangladesh, then known as East Pakistan.

The former princely state of Kashmir was divided between India and Pakistan in 1947 when British colonial rule of the sub-continent ended.

Muslim militants in India's Jammu-Kashmir state have waged a secessionist uprising demanding either independence or union with Pakistan. Jammu-Kashmir is the only Muslim-dominated state in the predominantly Hindu nation.

India has accused Pakistan of arming and training the militants. Islamabad denies the charges, but has offered political and moral support for the militants.

4 Irishmen face charges of smuggling arms to IRA

PARIS (R) — Four Irishmen accused of trying to smuggle 150 tonnes of weapons and explosives from Libya to Ireland for the Irish Republican Army (IRA) go on trial in Paris Monday.

The four men were arrested off the French coast in 1987 aboard the cargo ship Eksund II, which was carrying 2.5 tonnes of Semtex explosive, 20 SAM-7 ground-to-air missiles, anti-aircraft guns, rockets, 100 Kalashnikov rifles and one million rounds of ammunition.

The arrests were hailed as a major breakthrough for Britain's attempts to halt the IRA's battle against British rule of Northern Ireland.

But it was revealed shortly afterwards that the Eksund's voyage from Libya had been the fifth such operation in two years.

Western intelligence sources say the four other ships delivered weapons and explosives to isolated Irish beaches, to be picked up by Republican guerrillas.

Irish police concede that most of the IRA arms dumps have never been found and new Police Commissioner Patrick Culligan said Saturday that finding them was his top priority.

Culligan said: "I am very conscious of the fact that hidden out there somewhere are very large stores of IRA guns, ammunition and explosives."

The Eksund's captain, 52-year-old Adrian Hopkins, will be tried in absentia. He fled France after being granted provisional freedom last July and is being held by Irish authorities.

Police say Hopkins was involved in a business venture. The three others on trial have all acknowledged being members of the IRA. They are Gabriel Cleary, 47, James Coll, 39, and James Doherty, 47.

The four are charged with illegal arms transport and face a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison if convicted.

France's top anti-terrorist magistrate Jean-Louis Bruguiere, who has led the investigation into the case, has also issued international arrest warrants for six Libyans he alleges were involved in the gun-running.

Rebels call urgent meeting on Sri Lankan ceasefire violations

COLOMBO (AP) — The Tamil Tiger rebels said Sunday they were convening an urgent meeting to study what they called continuing ceasefire violations by Sri Lankan government forces.

"The ceasefire violations by Sri Lankan government forces are construed by the (Tiger) leadership as a provocation," the guerrilla group said in a statement.

"Despite these provocations, the (Tiger) leadership is genuinely looking forward to a return to normalcy and starting negotiations," the statement added.

It did not say where or when the Tiger leaders will meet or what action would be contemplated.

The Tigers claimed an army sniper killed a guerrilla named Amalan Friday on the Jaffna peninsula, 300 kilometres north of Colombo. It was the first casualty the Tigers have acknowledged since they declared a

unilateral ceasefire starting New Year's Day.

The rebels, who have been fighting since 1983 for a homeland for the Tamil minority, accused the Sinhalese-dominated government of violating the ceasefire five times between Thursday and Saturday.

On Saturday, the Tigers accused the government of violating the ceasefire nine times since Tuesday. The government accused the Tigers of breaking the peace at least four times.

Military officials in Colombo denied their troops had opened fire on the Tigers. After the Tigers made their ceasefire offer, the military ordered its men to stop all offensive actions for 10 days while the government studied the guerrilla proposal to resume peace talks.

"Troops are under strict orders and have taken action only when rebels sent probes into our positions," one military official said, speaking on condi-

tion of anonymity. He said three soldiers had been wounded by rebel fire since the Jan. 1 ceasefire.

International Alert, a London-based human rights organisation, suggested Saturday that the ceasefire be monitored by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

But Sri Lanka's army commander, Lt.-Gen. Hamilton Wanasinghe, said Sunday the suggestion was premature.

"We are watching the situation very carefully and will make a final assessment when the government's 10-day period suspending offensive operations is over. Until then we don't think there is any need for anybody to monitor the ceasefire," Wanasinghe said.

The government has said it is studying the "genuineness" of the Tigers' offer to reopen peace negotiations.

13 killed in Indian bus accident

JAMMU India (AP) — A bus swerved off a mountain road in Jammu-Kashmir state, killing 13 passengers and injuring 34 others, officials said Saturday.

The driver apparently lost control when a cassette player in a compartment above fell on his head. Press Trust of India quoting police as saying.

Nine of the injured were hospitalised with serious injuries following the accident, in which the bus plunged off a muddy mountain road into a river bed, the news agency said.

The accident occurred 140 kilometres northeast of Jammu, the state's summer capital.

Small plane crashes in U.S., 6 killed

MUSKOGEE, Oklahoma (AP) — A small plane crashed in a pasture near the municipal airport Saturday, killing all six people on board, authorities said.

Oklahoma Highway Patrol dispatcher Todd Riggs said late Saturday the crash occurred during takeoff.

According to the flight plan filed through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) office in McAlester, the plane was leaving Muskogee for Albuquerque, New Mexico, said Allene Thompson, an FAA spokeswoman in the Fort Worth, Texas, office.

The crash occurred at 8:11 p.m. (0241 GMT) near Davis Field, an old military base four miles (6.4 kilometres) southeast of Muskogee now used for private and military flights.

The names of the six victims had not been released late Saturday.

Bearl Davis, on whose land the plane crashed, said he and his wife, Aila, were watching television when they saw a flash of light.

Albania frees 202 political prisoners

VIENNA (R) — Albania's ruling Communists, in a move which appeared to meet a key opposition demand ahead of multi-party elections, pardoned more than 200 political prisoners and said others jailed for political crimes might be freed.

The President of the People's Assembly, chaired by President Ramiz Alia, granted 202 pardons at a meeting Saturday, the Albanian news agency ATA reported.

The presidium also "charged the competent state organs to study and forward to its next meeting the question of granting pardons to all the other persons sentenced for political offences, agitation and propaganda and defection," ATA said.

Fresh violence was reported earlier in Eastern Europe's last outpost of Communist rule. ATA said four people were injured when police clashed with people from the town of Shkoder who tried to cross into Yugoslavia.

The new opposition Democratic Party, which will mount the first challenge in 46 years to Alia's Communist Party of Labour in parliamentary elections set for Feb. 10, had demanded the immediate release of all political prisoners.

"It was our request to set free all political prisoners and perhaps this is the first sign that this request was not a voice in

the wilderness," Democratic Party spokesman Genc Polo said by telephone from Tirana.

He said his party would continue to press for the release of all political detainees and the government must give them jobs and means of support.

ATA said the 202 pardoned prisoners had been jailed for anti-state agitation and propaganda or for trying to flee the country, an offence which until judicial reforms last May ranked as treason punishable by death.

It also reported for the first time that a further 191 political prisoners had been freed since June 12 last year.

The authorities had previously said that only about 85 political prisoners were detained in the small Balkan state.

The Democratic Party was formed as Albania's first non-Communist force amid unprecedented student and worker unrest in mid-December as Alia loosened his party's grip on power after more than four decades of Stalinist rule.

It wants elections delayed until May so that it can organise an effective challenge, a demand Alia has rejected.

ATA said the presidium also laid down new guidelines on the use of firearms by border guards and other security forces, but it did not make clear if orders to shoot at would-be escapees had been rescinded.

COLUMN 8

Man kills daughter, jumped to his death

KOTA KINABALU, Malaysia (R) — A man desecrated by a wife pushed his two young daughters to their deaths off a high-rise building and then jumped after them, police in the east Malaysian state of Sabah said. Eng Chee How took his daughters, aged four and five, to the 15-storey town hall in Sandakan Friday after a visit to the cinema. He blindfolded them, pushed them off the building and jumped to his own death. Police said Eng, 26, was depressed because his wife had left him for another man.

More U.S. teenage girls do it

ATLANTA (R) — The percentage of adolescent American girls having sexual intercourse nearly doubled between 1970 and 1988, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control reported Friday. CDC warned in a new study that teenage girls, whose sexual experimentation is beginning at increasingly younger ages, are risking serious health consequences including infertility, cancer and death. In 1970 about 28.8 per cent of females between 15 and 19 reported they had premarital sexual intercourse. By 1988, that percentage had increased to 51.5 per cent. Seva Aral, chief of behavioural studies for the CDC division charged with preventing the spread of sexually transmitted disease, said most teenagers were not using safe sex practices. The CDC said that only about 8.2 per cent of teenage women reported that they used condoms. Although the figure was twice the percentage using condoms in 1970, it was far outpaced by the increased incidence of sex among teenagers. "There are very serious health consequences apart from AIDS," Aral said. "Obviously we need to do more and pay the area of health education adolescents." Although all engage in sex with multiple partners and do not use a condom are at risk for AIDS, women — especially teenagers — risk other serious consequences, she said. Aral said cervical cancer seems to be clearly a sexually transmitted condition and noted the virus which causes genital warts and genital herpes may be linked to cervical cancer.

Bikini-clad vendor is not a traffic hazard

WEST PALM BEACH, Florida (AP) — Scantly clad hot-dog vendor Gloria Gonzalez is not a traffic hazard, officials said. Palm Beach County traffic officials reviewed accident records and videotaped lunch-hour traffic passing her stand before concluding the bikini-wearing woman provoked heckling but no safety problems. The effort, requested by Palm Beach County commissioners, took about 20 hours and cost several hundred dollars in staff time. "I know that I didn't cause any accidents because they (drivers) wouldn't be going by so fast," Gonzalez drew official notice last year when former commissioner Ron Howard sought to ban vendors wearing thong bikinis, just as Florida banned the bikinis on state beaches. "She is not a traffic hazard, so let's get on with more important things," Commissioner Carole Phillips said.

Honesty makes cop a hero in Brazil

SAN PAULO, Brazil (AP) — In Brazil, where poorly paid policemen sometimes get charged with extortion or other crimes, an honest cop has become something of a celebrity. Sao Paulo state policeman Aurino Sales De Costa is in the news because he found the equivalent of about \$600 in cash and \$74,000 in checks — and returned it. "All I did was my duty," Da Costa told the O Estado De Sao Paulo newspaper. "I find it strange that people are surprised because I returned the money." The police department's press office said Da Costa, 33, who earns \$245 a month, found the loot Wednesday in 10 pouches left in a gutter. The pouches had been stolen from an armoured truck that collected the money from street police, said. The bandits dumped the bags in a gutter, apparently overlooking the checks and the remaining money. The office said. Police said Da Costa will receive a medal for honesty.

Bangladesh political leader calls for tightening border

DHAKA (R) — A rightist political leader has called for tightened security along Bangladesh's border with India to prevent illegal entry of foreigners who he said could interfere with forthcoming elections.

Abbas Ali Khan, chief of the Jamaat-E-Islami Party, said in a statement Sunday he was deeply concerned at reports of "illegal" entry of people through different points of border with huge (amounts of) arms and forged currency.

Villagers in the north Bangladesh district of Panchagarh Friday captured 10 members of the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) trying to kidnap a woman and loot property in a border village, newspaper reports said.

The villagers handed over the captured BSF men to Bangladesh Border Guards, police told reporters.

Khan asked the country's interim government, which has vowed to make parliamentary elections on Feb. 27 free and

impartial, to strengthen border patrols to stop illegal entry.

Khan, leader of the country's third largest political group, said: "Illegal entry from the other side of the border would create a serious situation in the country, and the coming elections could not be free and fair because of illegal interference by such entrants."

The interim government headed by Acting President Shakhbuddin Ahmad took over on Dec. 6 after former President Hossain Mohammad Ershad resigned following a violent campaign by political parties and students.

Reports from the border areas say the influx of people from India, including Bangladeshis hiding to escape arrest, has increased in recent weeks.

"Many of those crossing into Bangladesh have relations in this country. Others include people who had fled to India years ago," one official at southern Sakthira district told reporters.

7 missing after ship capsizes off U.K.

LONDON (R) — A Maltese-registered ship capsized in heavy seas off the British coast early Sunday and seven of its crew were missing, coastguards said.

A spokesman said helicopters rescued four crew members from the water and a lifeboat picked up another crewman later Sunday but his condition was not immediately known.

Divers joined the search at first light for other survivors from the overturned 1,000-tonne Kimya, about 16 miles southwest of the Welsh port of Holyhead.

Rescuers at first thought some crewmembers were trapped and possibly alive inside the ship, which turned over shortly after sending a "mayday" signal in a force 10 gale.

But the survivors later reported that all crew members were on deck wearing lifejackets when their ship capsized.

Most of Britain and Ireland have been hit by gales since Saturday.

The Kimya, sailing from Spain for the northern English port of Liverpool with a cargo of sunflower oil, reported before losing radio contact that it was listing 45 degrees.

It was skippered by a Norwegian with a crew of mixed nationality including Poles, Portuguese and Ghanaians.

Meanwhile 13 people, including six Swiss tourists crushed a falling tree, were killed Saturday when Ireland was lashed by gale force winds and torrential rain, police said.

The Swiss tourists, on a game-shooting trip to western Ireland, and an Irish teenager were killed instantly when their van was crushed by an uprooted tree near Galway.

Their mini-bus was flattened by a massive tree that suddenly fell from a flooded field. The tree fell right across the centre of the bus. It was a horrific sight, said Dr. Sean Murphy after the worst accident of the storm took place near his house.

The names of the Swiss, four men and two women all believed to be in their thirties, were not released.

Soviets reportedly found wreckage of KAL jet

MOSCOW (AP) — The government newspaper Izvestia has reported evidence that Soviet divers long ago discovered the wreckage of a Korean airliner shot down by Soviet fighters in 1983.

Izvestia reported recently that unidentified high-ranking officials told one of its reporters that military divers "climbed all over" the Boeing 747, which went down into the Sea of Japan on Sept. 1 1983. All 269 people aboard were killed.

But the newspaper said government agencies had refused to confirm the report, and it said it would not publish more details until it has thoroughly checked the information.

Izvestia did not say when the discovery took place, whether any bodies were found, or what was done with the wreckage of the KAL jet.

The destruction of Flight 007 caused an international outcry against the Soviet Union. George Schultz, then U.S. Secretary of State, accused the Soviet Air Force of shooting

down the plane when it accidentally strayed over a military area during a flight from New York to Seoul via Anchorage, Alaska.

Soviet officials initially kept silent about the disaster, then charged that the plane had invaded Soviet airspace on a secret spy mission.

Several weeks after the disaster, the Soviet Union turned over some debris — including seat cushions, oxygen tanks and clothing — to U.S. and Korean officials.

But the Soviet government has never said it found the plane's fuselage or key electronic parts, such as the "black box" flight recorder. Aviation investigators had hoped that those components would show how and why the flight went off course.

Izvestia reported on the issue in a half-page article published on Dec. 20. It said the plane was discovered at a depth of several dozen metres off Manoran Island, near Sakhalin, a large island north of Japan.

The issue was brought up at a news conference Friday, but Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaly Churkin said he knew nothing about the report.

Izvestia is published by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet Legislature. But like Soviet newspapers in the Glasnost era, it has taken to occasional muckraking and sometimes criticises the government.

The Dec. 20 article reported that four U.S. senators had written to President Mikhail Gorbachev asking for the results of any Soviet investigation into the disaster.

Izvestia suggested that it was time for the Soviet Union to turn over whatever information it has on the incident and, if the evidence warrants, to accept blame for "a monstrous mistake."

In an editor's note, the newspaper said one of its correspondents, Andrei Illesh, had visited the Soviet Air Base on Sakhalin shortly after the KAL-007 disaster.

"At that time it simply was not possible to conduct a journalistic

investigation on such a ticklish matter," the note said. "However, our reporter was able to become acquainted with a series of supposedly documentary photographs, showing a number of things that, also supposedly, were recovered from the Boeing."

"He also managed to get admissions from some officials that specialists — military seamen — found the giant plane that had crashed into the Sea of Japan. Moreover, scuba divers, also military, dove to the sea bottom and climbed all over KAL-007 from one end to the other."

The editor's note said verification was difficult, because "none of the official organisations will either confirm or deny the facts."

"Perhaps this article will help to clear the fog that has hung over the tragedy for seven years, and the editorial board will be able to publish the official materials that the relevant authorities undoubtedly have," it said.